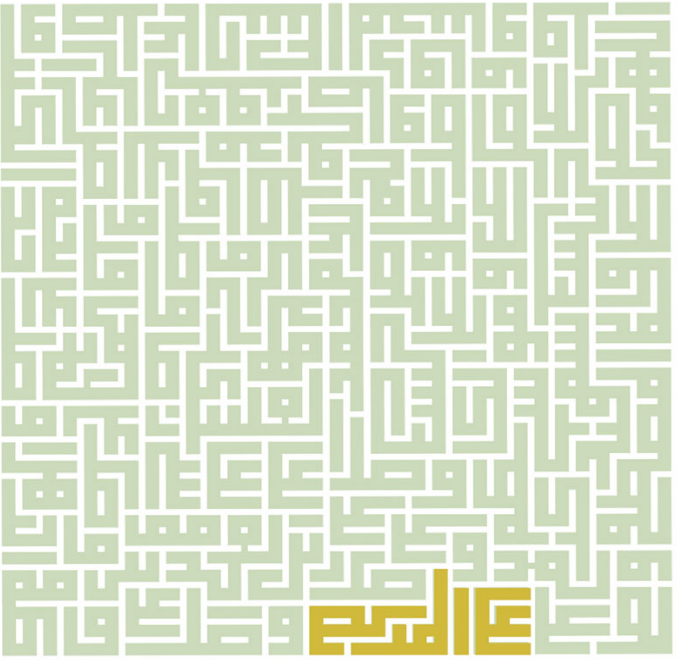
ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib

Rereading Historical Sources



By
Mohammadreza al-Khaghani

ICSS Press

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Mohammadreza al-Khaghani

ICSS Press, 2026

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Al-Abbas (a) Holy Shrine

al-Khaghani, Mohammad reza, 1989- author.

Ali b. Abi Talib : Rereading Historical Sources / By Mohammad reza al-Khaghani ; Translator : Yasser Pouresmaeil.-First Edition.-Najaf, Iraq : al-ʻAtabah al-ʻAbbāsīyah al-Muqaddasah. al-Markaz al-Islāmī lil-Dirāsāt al-Istirātījīyah, 2026.

618 page ; 24 cm

The text in English language translated from Persian language.

Includes bibliographical references : page 577-610.

ISBN : 9789922680859

1. Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Caliph, approximately 599-661. A. esmaeil, Yasser Pour, 1982- translator. B. Title.

LCC: BP193.1.A3 K43 2026

Center of Cataloging and Information Systems - Library and House of Manuscripts Al-Abbas Holy Shrine

Cataloging in Publication

Title: ʻAlī b. Abī Ṭālib: Rereading Historical Sources
Author: Mohammadreza al-Khaghani
Editor-in-Chief: Sayyid Hashim al-Milani
Editorial Board: Sayyid Mohsen Mousavi, Hamed Fayazi
Translator: Yasser Pouresmaeil

© ICSS Press, 2026

Printed in Iraq

iicss.iq

ICSS, Qom Branch
Moallem St
Qom, Iran

ICSS, Main Branch
Al-Barīd St
Najaf, Iraq

ICSS, Beirut Branch
Airport Road
Lebanon, Beirut

** Cover Image: the square Kufic inscription of Pīr-i Bakrān, incorporating the names of the Fourteen Infallibles (a), reworked by Shiiarts.com*

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Foreword

It is narrated from Imam al-Riḍā (a) that he said: "May God have mercy on the servant who revives our cause." ... [The transmitter] asked: "How is your cause revived?" He replied: "By learning our teachings and teaching them to the people, for if the people knew the merits of our words, they would surely follow us."

(Sadūq, *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā (a)*, 1: 307)

The present book is the second title in a series of works being compiled and written by the Shi'i Studies department of this center. The objective of this series is to further acquaint the young and educated generation with the history and teachings of the Infallibles (a). The exalted status of the Infallibles, as well as the ever-increasing intellectual and spiritual challenges and needs of our time, necessitates the continuous production of works concerning these great figures, tailored for various levels of readership.

With this aim, we have striven in the compilation of this series to present, to the best of our ability, a narrative that is concise, readable, and suited to the mindset and language of a contemporary audience, drawing upon reliable and authoritative sources.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all the authors and colleagues who have participated in this project, particularly Mohammadreza al-Khaghani, who played a major role in the compilation and writing of this work. We also express our sincere appreciation to Hujjat al-Islam Dr. Hamed Fayazi, the director of the Shi'i Studies department, who provided academic supervision for this project, and to the esteemed director of the Center, Hujjat al-Islam wa-l-Muslimin Dr. Sayyid Hashem al-Milani, without whose effective support this series would not have come to fruition.

With Divine assistance and the grace of the Imam of our Time (a), we hope to carry this path of service forward with strengthened resolve, guided by the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (a).

Sayyid Mohsen Mousavi
Director, Qom Office
ICSS

Introduction

ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib presents a challenge for any speaker: to do justice to him, one may risk exaggeration, and to neglect to do so, one may risk doing evil. The middle point is subtle, nuance, and difficult to develop except for the wise and the intelligent.

(Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 588)

Thirty years after God protected His House from Abraha's invasion in the Year of the Elephant, the Kaaba witnessed another miracle: the birth of ʿAlī (a). He was a personality who, like his dear cousin, the holy Prophet (s), transcended the boundaries of history and cast the light of wisdom and knowledge upon hearts and minds. All Islamic sects agree on his bravery, greatness of spirit, profound wisdom, and comprehensive knowledge. ʿAlī's role in the expansion of Islam, from the beginning of the divine revelation to the final days of his life, is an undeniable and unparalleled one—a role that politicized historiography has attempted to conceal behind veils of suppression.

Despite the vast number of works written about Imam ʿAlī (a), particularly in Arabic and Persian, there is still a need for a comprehensive and cohesive study that explains his multifaceted character to the contemporary generation in a clear and scholarly manner. Traditional Muslim historiography, with its prevalent focus on recording events and political life, has concentrated mostly on his five-year caliphate, largely neglecting the period before it—which was also very fruitful from a moral, academic, and spiritual perspective.

In contrast, hadith sources, especially works on virtues, have viewed the Imam's character from a different angle, focusing on his virtues and miracles. Despite facing political biases and historical attempts at distortion, these sources testify that no other Companion has been reported with such an abundance of virtues. However, these works often lack a coherent historical and analytical structure.

The Orientalists' perspective, especially in the classical period of Orientalism, was often influenced by Sunni sources and presented an incomplete or biased picture of Imam ʿAlī (a), portraying him as an ethical figure but one who was politically inept. Of course, in recent decades, more balanced studies have been published, such as the work

by Wilferd Madelung (d. 2023), but these works have also been mostly specialized, technical, and inaccessible to the general audience.

Among the works of contemporary Muslim authors, although efforts have been made to represent the different dimensions of the Imam's personality, each has had its shortcomings. Sunni works have often remained within the framework of the official historical narrative of Islam. Analytical and literary works, such as those by Abbas Mahmoud al-Aqqad (d. 1964) or ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʿAbd al-Maqṣūd (d. 1993), despite their high literary and emotional value, lack a documented and systematic research approach. The works of Shīʿī scholars, despite their academic rigor, have sometimes appeared difficult and unattractive to non-specialized readers due to their heavy volume, polemical tone, or complex structure.

Accordingly, writing a work that can narrate the various dimensions of Imam ʿAlī's life in a documented, analytical, yet smooth and understandable way for the present generation, using an academic approach and a systematic structure, is an undeniable necessity. Such a work should be able to portray him as an infallible Imam, a divine sage, a justice-seeking leader, and a timeless human role model.

ʿAlī (a) in Early Islamic Sources

Traditional Islamic historiography has primarily focused on reporting political events and the biographies of rulers. The life of Imam ʿAlī (a) is no exception to this rule. Although many of his moral, scholarly, and human virtues have been preserved, most historical sources have only represented him as the fourth Caliph of the Muslims, and have spoken less about his divine and spiritual status. For this reason, in reports related to the era of the first three caliphs, the share of Imam ʿAlī (a) is small and marginal. In contrast, during his almost five-year rule, sources have provided a relatively detailed account of his political life as the ruler of Muslims.

This issue stems from the elitism[1] of Muslim historians; an elitism that considered only the ruling classes worthy of being recorded in history and excluded other social layers, including scholars and thinkers—unless they had a political action—from the circle of narration.

1. Elitism in historiography means that only the ruling political class has been the focus of historians, and they have only narrated the events and incidents related to them. This point is clearly visible in Islamic historiography, as Muslim historians have directed all their attention to the ruling class and have narrated their lives and related political events. As a result, other social classes, including thinkers and scholars, have not been included in the narration of Muslim historians unless they had a political action.

In contrast, hadith sources, particularly works with a focus on virtues, have offered a different image of Imam ʿAlī (a). In these sources, he is sometimes presented alongside other companions and sometimes as the main subject.[1] Many of these works were compiled by Sunni hadith narrators throughout different centuries and demonstrate the widespread popularity of Ali's virtues in the Islamic world. As Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd (d. 656/1256) stated, "Thus, there has reached us, concerning his virtues, distinctions, merits, and precedences, that which none of those before him ever attained, nor those who strove equaled him in, nor those who seek can ever hope to overtake. And were it not that these qualities were like a fixed qibla in their renown, and like well-preserved traditions in their abundance, not a single word of them would have reached us in our own age, given the circumstances as we have described them."[2] Despite their extensive accounts of his virtues, these sources often lack a cohesive historical narrative.

On the other hand, some contemporary Sunni scholars, such as Muḥammad Rawwās Qalʿajī (d. 2019), while acknowledging Imam ʿAlī's scholarly and jurisprudential status, have pointed to the lack of attention given to his legacy. He writes, "If we compare what has been narrated in jurisprudence from ʿAlī [(a)] with what has been narrated from ʿUmar [b. al-Khaṭṭāb], ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar, and ʿAbd Allah b. ʿAbbās, we will find that the narrations from ʿAlī, despite his being more knowledgeable than them, are significantly fewer." He attributes this deficiency to political and religious enmities that caused much of ʿAlī's legacy to remain hidden.[3]

This concealment sometimes went so far that some jurists and hadith narrators, to avoid the wrath of the caliphate's establishment, used phrases like "a man from the Quraysh," "one of the companions of the Messenger of God," or even titles like "Abū Zaynab" instead of explicitly naming Imam ʿAlī (a) when narrating a hadith.[4]

Thus, a comparative analysis of historical and hadith sources shows that the image of Imam ʿAlī (a) in early Islamic sources was shaped by the political structure, religious atmosphere, and social biases of the time. To create a comprehensive and authentic portrait of him, this image requires a critical re-evaluation and a scholarly reconstruction based on original historical data.

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1. See e.g. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 563-726; Nasā'ī, *Khaṣā'iṣ Amīr al-mu'minīn*.
2. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 13: 224.
3. Qalʿajī, *Mawsūʿat Fiqh ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib*, 6-7.
4. Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 351.

Works on the Life of Imam ʿAlī (a)

Works that have addressed the life and biography of Imam ʿAlī (a) are generally divided into two main categories: works in English and works in Arabic and Persian.

Works in English

Compared to the extensive research on the Prophet of Islam (s) in the Western world, the number of Western works on Imam ʿAlī (a) is minimal. In most of these works, Imam ʿAlī (a) is either portrayed as a claimant to the caliphate after the Prophet (s), in opposition to Abū Bakr, or is simply introduced as one of the Muslim caliphs. Only a handful of these writings are specifically and exclusively dedicated to the life and thought of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a).

A general look at the views of Orientalists, particularly in the first period of Orientalism (until the early 20th century), reveals that their works were heavily influenced by Sunni historical and hadith sources. Consequently, they often reproduced the prevalent image found in these sources: a portrayal of Imam ʿAlī (a) as a justice-oriented ruler who was nevertheless inept at political management, and whose caliphate was accompanied by three major civil wars. Although his virtues, such as seeking truth, asceticism, and courage, were noted, these works generally introduced Imam Ali as a man of high morals but lacking sufficient political skills.[1]

From the mid-20th century onwards, with the entry of Muslim scholars into the field of Western Islamic studies, the Orientalists' view became somewhat more balanced, and historical data were analyzed with a more critical approach. A prominent example of this shift is Wilferd Madelung's book, *The Succession to Muhammad*. Despite some criticisms,[2] this work is considered one of the most important studies on the issue of the caliphate after the Prophet (s) and the position of Imam ʿAlī (a) in it.

This evolution can also be observed in the development of entries in Western encyclopedias. For instance, the entry "ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib" in the second edition of *the Encyclopaedia of Islam*, written by Laura Veccia Vaglieri, still presents an image influenced by Sunni sources.[3] In contrast, Robert M. Gleave, in the third edition of *the*

1. See Shaykhul'islāmī, Rafīʿī, and Qurayshī, "Āsībshināsī-yi ārā wa naẓarāt-i Khāwarshināsān darbāra-yi dīdgāh-hāyi siyāsī wa ijtimāʿī-yi ḥaḍrat-i ʿAlī (a)."

2. See ʿAbdulmuḥammadī and Raḥīmī, *Imām ʿAlī (a) jānishīn-i Rasūlullāh (s)*. Furthermore, Sayyed Hāshim al-Mīlānī criticizes some of Madelung's views; see: *Khilāfat Muḥammad; Baḥth*^{un} *ḥawl al-Kilāfa fī waqt*^{in} *mubakkir* (*Muhammad's Caliphate: Discussion on the Caliphate in an Early Period*).

3. See Vaglieri, "ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib," *EI*^{2} 1: 381-86.

Encyclopaedia of Islam, offers a more analytical and balanced portrayal of Imam ʿAlī's character.[1]

Among the few recent works in English on the life of Imam ʿAlī (a) that have gained attention is *The Prophet's Heir: The Life of Ali b. Abi Talib* by Hassan Abbas. Although this book shares its subject with the present research, there are differences in perspective, research methodology, and historical narrative.

It's difficult to categorize Hassan Abbas's book as a purely historical work; rather, it should be seen as a literary and historical attempt to introduce Imam ʿAlī (a) to the contemporary generation. The multitude of references to various viewpoints—from Sunni and Shīʿī to Sufi, fundamentalist, and extremist tendencies—is a testament to the author's effort to present a multifaceted image of Imam ʿAlī (a). However, the lack of sufficient attention to authentic Islamic sources, both historical and hadith-based, has caused the work to rely more on image-building and non-analytical narrative than on precise historical analysis.

Works in Arabic and Persian

The works written by Muslims in Arabic and Persian about Imam ʿAlī (a) can be divided into two main categories: works by Sunni authors and works by Shīʿī authors.

Most works by Sunni authors are influenced by the official narrative of Islamic historiography, which generally overlooks Imam ʿAlī's divine status and portrays him as the fourth caliph. In addition, certain contemporary intellectual trends, such as the anti-Shīʿī stance of the Salafi movement or extremist views, have also influenced the way Imam ʿAlī's character is historically portrayed.[2]

However, some works by Sunni intellectuals have emerged that have gone beyond this traditional framework. These include the writings of Abbas Mahmoud al-Aqqad and ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʿAbd al-Maqṣūd, who have tried to present a different image of Imam ʿAlī (a).

In his work, al-Aqqad portrays Imam ʿAlī (a) not as a ruler, but as a sublime human being. In his view, the Imam's bravery is intertwined with a gentle and poetic spirit, full of contemplation and emotion.[3] This work is not a historical book in the conventional sense, but a literary piece based on historical data that tries to introduce Imam ʿAlī (a) as

1. See Gleave, "ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib," *EI*[3] (Online).

2. An example of this perspective is the book *Sīrat Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib*, authored by Ali Muhammad As-Sallabi and translated into English in two volumes as *Biography of Ali Ibn Abi Talib*. Throughout his work, he attempts to challenge Shīʿī beliefs by relying on the official Sunni reading of ʿAlī's life.

3. ʿAqqād, *ʿAbqariyyat al-Imām ʿAlī*, 7-8.

an influential figure in the history of Islamic thought. Instead of focusing on political events and historical contexts, he provides a personal analysis of the Imam (a), considering his destiny to be the result of an inevitable conflict between moral idealism and political realism. Ultimately, with his eloquent language and unique rhetorical style, al-Aqqad introduces ʿAlī (a) as an unparalleled figure; someone who was born in the Kaaba and was martyred in the mosque, the House of God; a man who combined seemingly contradictory but internally synergistic qualities: courage and wisdom, rule and asceticism, warrior spirit and poetry, and so on.[1]

Overall, *ʿAbqariyyat al-Imām ʿAlī* (The Genius of Imam ʿAlī) should be seen as an analytical-literary work that focuses on the character of Imam ʿAlī (a). Using a descriptive-psychological and comparative approach, it attempts to reflect his genius and greatness within the context of the conflict between religious ethics and the social reality of his time.

ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʿAbd al-Maqṣūd's work is also written more in the form of a historical novel. In this book, he portrays the life of Imam ʿAlī (a) from birth to martyrdom through a narrative and a smooth, captivating prose. This work, the result of three decades of research and writing, analyzes historical events in its various chapters using literary fiction and critiques the views of some Sunni historians and authors. Although in some cases, such as the issue of Abū Ṭālib's faith, he has accepted the common Sunni view, his book is overall fair.[2]

Overall, this book can be considered part of the historical fiction genre. While it has an engaging and narrative-driven prose, it attempts to re-examine and recreate the life of Imam ʿAlī (a) with a fair perspective.

Among Shīʿī authors, the topic of Imam ʿAlī (a) has always been one of the main focuses of writing and research since the first centuries of Islam. Followers of the Imami school have produced various works in most branches of Islamic sciences—from history and exegesis to jurisprudence, hadith, and theology—all centered on the personality and status of their first Imam (a). Sometimes, they have compiled his virtues and merits from the hadith sources of both sects; at other times, they have authored Quranic commentaries centered on Imam ʿAlī's role; and in many cases, they have strived to explain the legitimacy of his caliphate from a theological and historical perspective after the death of the Prophet (s).

1. See Ibid., 129-31.

2. See Miʿmārī, "'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Abd al-Maqṣūd."

In the later periods, a large number of Imami authors have written works on the lives and biographies of the Infallible Imams (a), a significant portion of which is dedicated to Imam ʿAlī (a). These works have sought, first and foremost, to portray the Imam (a) as an "infallible Imam" and reflect his scholarly, moral, and practical status. There is no doubt that a large part of these works has succeeded in achieving this goal. However, their focus on theological discussions, historical disputes, and extensive efforts to refute doubts and respond to the claims of opponents have made it difficult for the non-specialized reader to follow the historical narrative of ʿAlī's life in these texts.

On the other hand, the sheer volume of some of these works and their technical, sometimes difficult language, have created a barrier for the general audience—especially the contemporary young generation—to benefit from them. Beyond these content-related points, some of these works also face challenges in their research structure. The lack of scholarly organization in sources and references, weak documentation, and inattention to the political and social contexts of historical events are among the issues that have caused these works, despite their rich content, not to receive sufficient attention from academic circles.

Research Objectives

The aim of this research is to fill the existing gap. By adopting a historical-analytical approach, this book aims to reinterpret the life of Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) within the context of the political, social, and theological backgrounds of the early Islamic period. The main objectives of this research can be summarized in four key areas:

Providing a multidimensional portrayal: This involves creating a comprehensive image of Imam ʿAlī (a) across all aspects of his life, including his scholarly and spiritual status, ethical and educational conduct, political and governmental thought, and his role in explaining and safeguarding authentic Islamic teachings.

Historical contextualization: This goal focuses on analyzing the events related to Imam ʿAlī (a) within the historical, political, social, and ideological contexts of his time. The aim is to achieve a more realistic and profound understanding of his actions and decisions.

Presenting Imam ʿAlī (a) for today's audience: The research seeks to present the pure teachings of ʿAlī (a) in a scholarly, up-to-date, and comprehensible format for contemporary readers. This bridges the gap between classical Shīʿī heritage and modern intellectual and research concerns.

Serving as a resource for both the general public and specialists: The book is written to be accessible to a general audience interested in the life and character of Imam ʿAlī (a). At the same time, it serves as a preliminary and systematic introduction for students and researchers undertaking historical and analytical studies about him.

Key Features of the Book

As mentioned earlier, historical sources by Muslims, influenced by their elitist approach, have primarily focused on the political dimensions of Imam ʿAlī's life. In contrast, Shīʿī works have strived to present an image of him as an infallible Imam and a figure of great scholarly and spiritual authority. This book, however, aims to adopt a moderate, analytical, and contextual approach, taking into account the unique circumstances of the historical events during ʿAlī's era.

Undoubtedly, Muslim historians have recorded a wealth of information about the caliphate of Imam ʿAlī (a) and its events. However, this data was heavily shaped by the political and theological biases of its authors and compiled long after the events took place. Furthermore, their focus on wars and political disputes has marginalized other aspects of Imam ʿAlī's character, such as his intellectual, ethical, civilizational, and educational dimensions.

Accordingly, the sources used in this book are not limited to historical works; they also draw upon hadith, literary sources, and especially *Nahj al-Balāgha*, to paint a more complete picture of ʿAlī's life. The reality is that examining the life of Imam ʿAlī (a) is impossible without considering the political and theological contexts of the early Islamic period. For example, the issue of the caliphate was not merely a theological dispute; it was a crucial and fateful event whose consequences continued for centuries in Islamic history. The formation of the Kharijite sect after the Battle of Ṣiffīn is one example of this historical continuity.

Keeping these points in mind, this book attempts to cover the life of Imam ʿAlī (a) from his birth to his martyrdom, considering all political, social, theological, and ethical aspects. The features of this book can be summarized in a few main points:

1. A Shīʿī Perspective on the Life of Imam ʿAlī (a)

This book re-examines the life of Imam ʿAlī (a) by drawing on a wide range of Islamic sources, including historical, hadith, literary, and exegetical texts, written by both Sunni and Shīʿī scholars. In this process, Shīʿī sources are treated not merely as theological texts but as historical resources with research value.

2. An Accessible Text for a General Audience

To meet the needs of non-specialist readers and to make the teachings of ʿAlī (a) more accessible to the public, this book aims to present a clear and straightforward account of Imam ʿAlī's (a) life. In-depth theological and historical analyses have been moved to the footnotes, except where essential, to create a more readable text that facilitates a better understanding of historical events. The book avoids complex language, convoluted sentences, and scattered analyses, striving instead to use a clear narrative that familiarizes the reader with the social, political, and cultural contexts of Imam ʿAlī's time.

3. Commitment to Academic Structure and Referencing

Throughout the book, historical data has been primarily sourced from first-hand, reliable sources. In cases involving disputed issues among different Islamic denominations, an effort has been made to draw on sources from both sides while keeping references concise. The writing style also integrates the author's analysis with the textual data in a way that allows the reader to distinguish between the historical account and the analytical interpretation.

Intended Audience and Structure of the Book

This book is intended for today's generation—including both Shia and non-Shia, Muslims and non-Muslims, specialists and non-specialists. Its main goal is to introduce readers to the life of Imam ʿAlī (a) through a smooth, well-documented, and understandable narrative. To achieve this, the book is organized into three main sections:

Section One: Biography of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a)

This section is dedicated to the historical narrative of Imam ʿAlī's (a) life, from his birth to his martyrdom. The approach is narrative-driven, documented, and yet simple and easy to understand. It is designed to familiarize the reader with the sequence of historical events during Ali's era and their political and social contexts.

Section Two: Articles

This section aims to introduce the various facets of Imam ʿAlī's (a) personality from different perspectives. Topics that were not suitable for the narrative-based life story are presented here as specialized articles. These articles are as follows:

1) Imam ʿAlī (a) in the Words of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) and His Companions

This article examines diverse hadith and historical sources to collect and analyze what others have narrated about Imam ʿAlī (a), including the Ahl al-Bayt (a), the Companions, and the Successors. The article is structured into two sections: 1-The portrayal of Imam ʿAlī (a) in the words of the Ahl al-Bayt (a); and 2-Imam ʿAlī (a) in the words of his companions.

2) Imam ʿAlī's Imamate: Arguments and Textual Evidence

This article, after defining the concept of Imamate in both Shīʿī and Sunni thought, examines the most important Quranic, historical, and narrative evidence for the Imamate of Imam ʿAlī (a). The differences in viewpoints regarding the institution of the Imamate are also analyzed, with the primary focus of the research being references to Sunni hadith and exegetical sources.

3) The Meaning of "Walī/Mawlā" in Imami Theology

This article examines the theological arguments of Imami theologians regarding the terms *Walī* in the Verse of *Wilāya* and *Mawlā* in the Hadith of Ghadir. Two main approaches to interpreting these terms are analyzed: first, understanding "having priority" as a possible meaning; and second, accepting this meaning as the primary and true meaning of the term.

4) Abū Ṭālib (a): Supporter of the Prophet (s)

This article focuses on the life of Abū Ṭālib (a), the Imam ʿAlī's father, examining the historical and theological evidence for his faith. The analysis is based on reports from primary historical sources, narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt (a), and the arguments of Imami theologians.

5) The Companions of Imam ʿAlī (a)

This article re-examines the biographies of fifteen of Imam ʿAlī's most prominent companions, from the time of the Prophet (s) up to the post-caliphate period. It seeks to explain the role each of them played in significant events and their companionship with the Imam (a) in various situations.

6) Imam ʿAlī (a) and Theological Teachings

This article categorizes and explains the theological teachings based on the narrations of Imam ʿAlī (a), according to the five principles of Imami beliefs: Monotheism, Prophethood, Justice, Imamate, and Resurrection.

7) History of Imam ʿAlī's Shrine

In this article, the historical evolution of Imam ʿAlī's burial place is examined, from the time it was hidden to its current state. It also reviews and introduces the stages of expansion, reconstruction, and transformation of the shrine from the Abbasid period to the contemporary era.

8) Nahj al-Balāgha (Abolfazl Hafezian Baboli)

This article provides an overview of the history of the compilation of *Nahj al-balagha* by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 406/1015), its content structure, its documentary status and narrators, and an examination of questions and responses regarding this work. At the end, a bibliography of *Nahj al-balagha* and the most important sources about it are introduced.

9) Economic Justice (Mohammad Mahdi Karami-Askar Dirbaz)

This article examines the concept of justice in the economic policies of Imam ʿAlī's government. The main focus is on economic balance, social solidarity, and his efforts to ensure the public's access to the resources of the Islamic government.[1]

Section Three: Selected Hadiths

This section contains a collection of selected narrations from Imam ʿAlī (a) across various fields, including ethics, politics, worship, social rights, and educational teachings. The purpose of this section is to directly familiarize the reader with the language and teachings of Imam ʿAlī (a), in addition to the historical narrative and theological and political analyses.

Overall, the book's three-layered structure (biography, articles, Hadiths) allows the reader to benefit from the historical narrative, gain access to intellectual analyses, and become directly acquainted with the words and tradition of ʿAlī (a) through primary texts.

It should be noted that all English translations of the Holy Quran used in the book are from the English translation of the Quran by Ali Quli Qarai. Also, wherever the English translation of the phrases from *Nahj al-balagha* appears in the text, it has been taken from the translation by Tahera Qutbuddin.[2]

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1. We sincerely thank the Research Institute for Islamic Culture and Thought for their cooperation in facilitating the republication of these two articles in the present collection.

2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-. *Nahj al-Balāghah; The Wisdom and Eloquence of ʿAlī*. Translated by Tahera Qutbuddin. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2024.

Concluding Remarks

I consider it my duty to express my sincere gratitude to all the esteemed individuals who helped me in the writing and completion of this research. Special thanks go to Dr. Seyyid Mohsen Mousavi and Dr. Hamed Fayazi, whose perceptive insights, guidance, and valuable suggestions paved the way for this research to come to fruition. I also extend my deepest appreciation for the unwavering support of Hojjat al-Islām Dr. Seyyid Hashim al-Milani, the respected head of the center.

Undoubtedly, neither this work nor any of what has been written about Imam ʿAlī (a) so far, or will be written in the future, will ever be able to fully portray all the dimensions of that great Imam's personality. This is because the pen and paper are incapable and insufficient in the face of the vastness of ʿAlī's perfections. Nevertheless, I hope that this small effort will serve as a spiritual reserve and a provision for the afterlife for this humble servant, in the eyes of the Lord.

Mohammadreza al-Khaghani
August 2025

Chronological Survey

599	13 Rajab/9 October: Birth of ʿAlī (a) in the Kaaba
610	Advent of Prophet Muḥammad (s) and the conversion of ʿAlī (a) to Islam
617-20	Muslims' confinement in the Valley of Abū Ṭālib
620	Deaths of Abū Ṭālib (a) and Khadīja bt. Khuwaylid (a)
621	First Pledge of ʿAqaba
622	Second Pledge of ʿAqaba
622	Laylat al-Mabīt and migration to Medina
1-2/622-23	Marriage of ʿAlī (a) and Fāīima (a)
2/623	Rabīʿ I/September: Battle of Badr
3/625	Ramadan/March: Birth of al-Ḥasan (a)
3/625	Shawwāl/March: Battle of Uḥud
4/625-26	The death of Fāṭima bt. Asad (a), mother of ʿAlī (a)
4/626	3-5 Shaʿbān/11-13 January: Birth of al-Ḥusayn (a)
5/627	Shawwāl/February: Battle of al-Aḥzāb (al-Khandaq)
6/627-28	Birth of Zaynab (a)
6/628	Dhū l-Qaʿda/March-April: Treaty of Ḥudaybiyya

7/628	Muḥarram/May-June: Battle of Khaybar; story of returning the sun
8/630	Ramadan/December-January: Conquest of Mecca
8/630	Shawwāl/January-February: Compensation for the Losses caused by Khālid b. al-Walīd
8/630	Shawwāl/January-February: Battle of Ḥunayn
8/630	Shawwāl/January-February: Battle of Ṭāʾif; the Prophet's private ponversation with ʿAlī (a) (*al-Najwā*)
9/630	Rabīʿ II/July-August: Mission to estroy the idol tempel of al-Fuls
9/630	Rajab/October-November: Battle of Tabūk; Ḥadīth al-Manzila
8-9/629-31	First expedition to Yemen
9/630-31	Event of Mubāhala
9/630-31	Event of Closing the Doors (*Sadd al-Abwāb*)
9/631	Dhū l-Ḥijja: Conveying Surah al-Barāʾa by ʿAlī (a)
10/631	Second Expedition to Yemen
10/631	Rabīʿ I/June-July: Death of Ibrāhīm, the Prophet's son
10/632	Dhū l-Ḥijja: Farewell Hajj (*Ḥajjat al-Widāʿ*)
10/632	18 Dhū l-Ḥijja/19 March: Event of Ghadīr
11/632	28 Ṣafar/19 March: Death of the Prophet (s) and the formation of the Saqīfa
11-13/632-34	Caliphate of Abū Bakr
11/632	3 Jumādā II/29 August: Martyrdom of Fāṭima (a)
12-13/633-34	Ridda wars
13-23/634-44	Caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Kaṭṭāb
23/644	Dhū l-Ḥijja/November: The assassination of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb
23-35/644-56	Caliphate of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān
29/649-50	Beginning of people's protests against ʿUthmān

35/656	Dhū l-Ḥijja/May-June: Assassination of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān by protestors
35/656	18 Dhū l-Ḥijja/17 June: Pledge of allegiance to ʿAlī (a) and the beginning of his rule
36/656	10 Jumādā II/18 December: Battle of Jamal
36/656	Unrest in the Sijistān (Sistan) region
36/657	12 Rajab/4 January: Change of the capital to Kufa
37/657	1 Ṣafar/22 July: Battle of Ṣiffīn
37/657	13 Ṣafar/31 July: Cessation of the War; first arbitration agreement
37/658	Ramadan/February-March: Final arbitration meeting
37/658	10 Shawwāl/21 March: Official formation of the Kharijites
37/657	5 Rajab/17 December: Appointment of Mālik al-Ashtar as governor of Egypt
38/658	9 Ṣafar/18 July: Battle of Nahrawān
38/658	Rabīʿ II-Ramadan/January-October: Scattered riots by the Kharijites
38/658	Martyrdom of Mālik al-Ashtar
38-40/658-61	Looting by Muʿāwiya's army
40/661	19 Ramadan/20 January: Assassination attempt on ʿAlī (a)
40/661	21 Ramadan/22 January: Martyrdom of ʿAlī (a)

I. Biography of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a)

From Birth to Hijra

Birth in the Kaaba

According to the majority view, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) was born on the 13th of Rajab, eleven years prior to the commencement of Muhammad's prophetic mission, which corresponds to the date of October 9, 599.[1] An extraordinary occurrence associated with the early life of ʿAlī (a) is the account of his birth taking place within the confines of the Kaaba. The event is recounted in several sources.[2] The esteemed Sunni scholar of hadith, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405/1015), holds the belief that accounts of this event, based on historical and hadith-based reports, were frequently transmitted (*mutawātir*).[3] Imam ʿAlī's birth has been the subject of numerous independent writings by scholars of hadith and historians. Prominent scholars such as Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157/774),[4] Abū l-Bakhtarī (d. 200 /816),[5] al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991),[6] Abū l-ʿAlāʾ al-Hamdānī (d. 569/1173-74),[7] and Abū Muḥammad al-ʿAlawī (d. ?)[8] have authored notable works on this subject. Additionally, there have been dedicated works on this issue by various subsequent

1. See Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 15; Kulaunī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 425; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 5; Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, 1: 98-9; Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 3: 1093; Ṭabrisī, *Iʿlām al-warā*, 153; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 26; Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 3: 307; Irbilī, *Kashf al-ghumma*, 1: 59.
2. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 349; Ḥalabī, *al-Sīra al-Ḥalabiyya*, 3: 520; see also Fākihī, *Akhbār Makka*, 3: 198.
3. Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 550.
4. Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, 5: 300.
5. Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 430.
6. Ibid., 392.
7. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *al-Yaqīn*, 485; see also Kohlberg, *Ibn Ṭāwūs and His Library*, 207.
8. Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 7: 431.

sources until the contemporary era.[1] In Imami sources of hadiths and certain Sunni sources, there are narrations on the subject from Imam al-Sajjād (a),[2] Imam al-Ṣādiq (a),[3] Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī (d. 78/698),[4] Saʿīd b. al-Jubayr (d. 95/714),[5] ʿĀʾisha, and ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib.[6] According to these accounts, ʿAlī (a) stands as the unique individual to have been born within the walls of the Kaaba.[7]

As per a hadith from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), which was narrated by ʿĀʾisha and ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib as well, Fāṭima bt. Asad (a) carried ʿAlī (a) in her womb for a duration of nine months. As the intensity of labor grew, she approached the Kaaba. Beseeching God by the Kaaba, by Prophet Abraham (a), and by the child she was carrying, Fāṭima bt. Asad (a) implored for relief from her labor. Unexpectedly, a division appeared in one of the walls of the Kaaba, creating an opening for Fāṭima bt. Asad (a) to enter. As she stepped inside, the division closed behind her, concealing her from sight. Despite the attempts of the people to open the door of the Kaaba, their efforts proved futile. Witnessing this extraordinary occurrence, those in the vicinity recognized it as a divine intervention. After three days had passed, Fāṭima bt. Asad (a) emerged from the very same opening of the Kaaba, cradling ʿAlī (a) in her arms. She declared, "Indeed, God has chosen me from among His servants and granted me superiority over the women who came before me. God had chosen Āsiya bt. Muzāḥim [Pharaoh's wife who embraced faith in God], who worshiped God secretly in a place that is not favored by God as a place of worship except in cases of emergency. In addition, Mary, the daughter of ʿImrān [Jesus's mother], was chosen by God, who eased her childbirth. In a desert, Mary approached a dry palm tree and caused it to shake, thereby providing her with its fruits [as a source of sustenance]. Verily, God chose me and granted me superiority over these two and all previous women. For I gave birth to my child within God's ancient abode [the Kaaba], where I found refuge and experienced the blessings of heavenly fruits."[8] The Prophet (s)

1. Pākatchī, *Mawlid Amīr al-Muʾminīn* (*a*); see also Urdūbādī, "ʿAlī (a) walīd al-Kaʿbs."; Jalālī, *Walīd al-Kaʿba*.
2. Ibn al-Maghāzilī, *Manāqib*, 26; Fattāl al-Nayshābūrī, *Rawḍat al-wāʿiẓīn*, 81.
3. Masʿūdī, *Ithbāt al-waṣiyya*, 134-45; Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 706-9.
4. Fattāl al-Nayshābūrī, *Rawḍat al-wāʿiẓīn*, 77-81; Ibn Shādhān, *al-Faḍāʾil*, 54-59; see also Shaʿīrī, *Jāmiʿ al-akhbār*, 15-6; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *al-Yaqīn*, 485-86.
5. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 132-33.
6. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 706.
7. See Masʿūdī, *Ithbāt al-waṣiyya*, 133; Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 132; Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal al-sharāʾiʿ*, 1: 135; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 5; Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 1: 5.
8. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 706-7; see also Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 132-33; Irbilī, *Kashf al-ghumma*, 1: 60.

revered the birth of ʿAlī (a) and consistently referred to the year of his birth as the "Year of Goodness (*sanat al-khayr*)" or the "Year of Blessing (*sanat al-baraka*)."[1]

Lineage and Family

He is ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib b. Hāshim b. ʿAbd Manāf b. Quṣayy b. Kilāb b. Murra b. Kaʿb b. Luʾay b. Ghālib b. Fihr b. Mālik b. al-Naḍr b. Kināna b. Khuzayma b. Mudrika b. Ilyās b. Muḍar b. Nazār b. Maʿd b. ʿAdnān.[2] ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), the son of the Prophet's paternal uncle, shared a lineage with the Prophet through their common ancestor, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (a). ʿAlī (a) was the fourth son of Abū Ṭālib (a), accompanied by his brothers Ṭālib, ʿAqīl, and Jaʿfar. Notably, there existed a decade-long interval between the birth of each sibling.[3]

ʿAlī's father, Abū Ṭālib (a), was a highly esteemed and influential figure within the Quraysh tribe. He held prominent roles, including providing sustenance (*al-rifāda*) to the pilgrims of Hajj and ensuring the supply of water (*al-siqāya*) for them, simultaneously undertaking both responsibilities. During that era, this position was regarded as one of the most crucial and esteemed roles in the city of Mecca.[4] Moreover, Abū Ṭālib (a) pursued a career in the trading of wheat and perfumes.[5]

Abū Ṭālib (a) commanded great respect and admiration among the people of Mecca due to his wisdom, dignity, and awe-inspiring presence.[6] His exceptional generosity was such that when he took it upon himself to provide food for the pilgrims of the Kaaba, no one else needed to offer sustenance.[7] Abū Ṭālib (a) played a pioneering role during the pre-Islamic era known as the Age of ignorance (Jāhiliyya) by introducing the practice of establishing oaths as testimony by families and relatives of a victim (*al-qasāma*). This tradition was later embraced and affirmed by Islam.[8] According to certain narratives, Abū Ṭālib (a) followed in the footsteps of his father and abstained from consuming wine.[9]

Following the demise of his father, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (a), Abū Ṭālib (a) assumed the custody of his eight-year-old nephew, Muḥammad (s).[10] According to certain accounts, as

1. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 4: 115.
2. Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, 1: 94-95.
3. See Ibn Kalbī, *Jumhurat al-nasab*, 30; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 41: 9; Ibn ʿInaba, *ʿUmdat al-ṭālib*, 30.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 57, 4: 15.
5. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, 575.
6. See Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 14; Qummī, *al-Kunā wa l-alqāb*, 1: 108-9.
7. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 23.
8. Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 6: 315-17.
9. See Ḥalabī, *al-Sīra al-ḥalabiyya*, 1: 165.
10. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 179; Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, 1: 179.

per the will of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (a), the custody of Muḥammad (s) was entrusted to Abū Ṭālib (a).[1] Muḥammad (s) was nurtured in the household of his uncle with utmost dignity and respect. He received an abundance of love and affection from his uncle, even surpassing that bestowed upon his cousins. It is narrated that Abū Ṭālib (a) would refrain from partaking of the food until Muḥammad (s) was present and seated at the dining cloth. He would instruct his own children to wait until Muḥammad (s) had arrived before commencing their meal.[2]

ʿAlī's mother, Fāṭima bt. Asad b. Hāshim b. ʿAbd Manāf b. Quṣayy,[3] held the distinction of being the first Hashimite woman to give birth to a child who belonged to the Hashimite lineage.[4] Fāṭima bt. Asad (a), the wife of Abū Ṭālib (a), assumed the role of a compassionate mother figure for the Prophet (s). She showed an unparalleled level of care and affection towards the Prophet (s), surpassing even that which she extended to her own children. Fāṭima bt. Asad (a) prioritized providing sustenance to him before attending to her own children's needs. Moreover, she diligently attended to his cleanliness and tidiness.[5] She was among the earliest women to embrace Islam and pledge her allegiance to the Prophet (s).[6] Fāṭima bt. Asad (a) holds the distinction of being the first woman to migrate to Medina.[7]

Throughout her stay in Medina, Fāṭima bt. Asad (a) received regular visits and attentive care from the Prophet (s).[8] Upon her passing, the Prophet (s) experienced deep sorrow and shrouded her with his own cloak. He participated in her burial, offering prayers for her eternal salvation.[9] The Prophet (s) referred to her as his mother.[10] The Imams, in their recommendations of certain rituals for dealing with specific hardships, have recommended performing circumambulation (*ṭawāf*) and offering two *rakʿas* of prayer on behalf of Abū Ṭālib (a), the Prophet's uncle, ʿAbd Allāh (a), the Prophet's father, Āmina (a), the Prophet's mother, and Fāṭima bt. Asad (a).[11]

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1. See Kharkūshī, *Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā*, 1: 389; Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 1: 36.
2. Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, 1: 96; Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 1: 37.
3. Ibn Kalbī, *Jumhurat al-nasab*, 30.
4. Zubayrī, *K. nasab Quraysh*, 40; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 555.
5. See Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 14.
6. Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 28-29; Ibn Ḥazm, *Jumhurat ansāb al-ʿArab*, 14; Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal al-sharāʾiʿ*, 2: 469.
7. See Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 453; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 5.
8. See Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 8: 178; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, 2: 38.
9. See Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 314-15; Abū Niʿaym al-Isbahānī, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, 5: 285.
10. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 453; Ibn Shādhān, *al-Faḍāʾil*, 102.
11. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 4: 544.

Names, Teknonyms, and Titles

Fāṭima bt. Asad (a) initially chose to name her son, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), as "Ḥaydara" (meaning lion). This decision stemmed from her desire for her son to have a name resembling that of her own father, Asad, which also meant lion. However, Abū Ṭālib (a) ultimately named him ʿAlī. On occasions when ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) recited paeans against Marḥab al-Khaybarī, he referred to himself as al-Ḥaydara, stating, "I am the one whom my mother named Ḥaydara."[1]

In sources of hadiths, diverse reasons are mentioned to explain the appellation of "ʿAlī" for him. According to some accounts, an otherworldly being, present during Fāṭima bt. Asad's departure from the Kaaba, cried out, "O Fāṭima! Name him ʿAlī, for he is exalted. God the all-exalted the most exalted says, 'I derived his name from Mine'."[2] In other accounts, it is mentioned that Abū Ṭālib (a) ventured to Abū Qubays Mountain during the night and beseeched the "Creator of the Plains" (*khāliq al-khaḍrāʾ*) to bestow a name upon his son. According to the narration, Abū Ṭālib (a) expressed his supplication in the form of a poem. Suddenly, a tablet descended from the sky, bearing verses that proclaimed that Abū Ṭālib's son should be named ʿAlī.[3] Amīr al-Muʾminīn (the Commander of the Faithful) himself also alludes to his name being derived from the name of God.[4]

Imam ʿAlī (a) was known by several teknonyms or kunyas. As per certain sources, during the lifetime of the Prophet (s), Imam al-Ḥasan (a) would address his father as "Abū l-Ḥusayn" (the father of al-Ḥusayn), whereas Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) would refer to him as "Abū l-Ḥasan" (the father of al-Ḥasan). After the passing of the Prophet (s), both Imam al-Ḥasan and Imam al-Ḥusayn addressed Imam ʿAlī (a) simply as "father" (*ab*).[5] The most well-known teknonym of Imam ʿAlī (a) is "Abū l-Ḥasan."[6] His other teknonyms include Abū l-Sibṭayn, Abū l-Rayḥānatayn, and Abū Turāb. As Arabs used the term "sibṭ" to refer to a grandchild who descended from one's daughter, Imam ʿAlī was given the title "Abū l-Sibṭayn," signifying the father of two such grandchildren. It is worth noting that this teknonym was frequently employed in sermons or situations where ʿAlī (a) himself or others sought to highlight his virtues.[7]

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1. See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 12.
2. Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal al-sharāʾiʿ*, 1: 136.
3. Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 174-75.
4. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 624.
5. See Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 39; Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 3: 113.
6. See Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 14; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, 203; Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 351.
7. See Ṭabarī al-Āmulī al-Kabīr, *al-Mustarshid*, 37; Masʿūdī, *Ithbāt al-waṣiyya*, 131; Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 74.

The teknonym "Abū l-Rayḥānatayn" (literally "father of two basils") originated from a hadith in which the Prophet (s) addressed Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) as follows: "O Abā al-Rayḥānatayn! Soon two of your pillars (*ruknāk*) will vanish." When the Prophet (s) mentioned "two pillars," he was referring to himself and ʿAlī's wife Fāṭima (a), who served as the pillars and refuges for ʿAlī (a).[1] In certain accounts, the Prophet's words are recorded as follows: "O Abū l-Rayḥānatayn! I advise you to look after my basil (*rayḥāna*) in this world. Soon two of your pillars will vanish."[2]

Among these, the most widely known teknonym of ʿAlī (a) was "Abū Turāb" (literally meaning "father of dust"), as he was bestowed with this title by the Prophet (s).[3] When it comes to the reason why the Prophet bestowed the title "Abū Turāb" upon ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), several explanations have been put forward. The most renowned account goes back to the battle of Dhāt al-ʿAshīra in 2/623, where Imam ʿAlī (a) and ʿAmmār b. Yāsir were resting beneath a palm tree. The Prophet woke them up and referred to Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), covered in dust, as "Abū Turāb."[4]

ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) possessed numerous titles, with around 200 being attributed to him. Among these, the most prominent title is "Amīr al-Muʾminīn" (Commander of the Faithful). ʿAlī b. Ṭāwūs al-Ḥillī (d. 664/1266) authored a book entitled "Al-Yaqīn bi ikhtiṣāṣ mawlānā ʿAlī (a) bi imrat al-muʾminīn" (Certainty in the exclusiveness of the commandership of the faithful to our master ʿAlī, peace be upon him). In this book, he compiled hadiths from the Prophet (s), as quoted from Sunni sources, to establish that ʿAlī (a) is indeed titled "Amīr al-Muʾminīn" (Commander of the Faithful).[5] Prior to him, al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Ibrāhīm al-Ghaḍāʾirī, commonly known as Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī (d. before 450/1058), authored a book titled "Al-Taslīm ʿalā Amīr al-Muʾminīn bi imrat al-muʾminīn" (Surrendering the commandership of the faithful to the Commander of the Faithful).[6]

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1. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 623.
2. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 135; Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, 1: 104; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 14: 166, 167.
3. See Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 40; Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, 1: 95; Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 1: 143.
4. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 599-600; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 7; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 89-90.
5. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *al-Yaqīn*, 1: 129-463.
6. Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 69. For mor information about names, teknonyms, and titles of Imam ʿAlī (a), see Mukhtārī, "Nām-hā wa laqab-hāyi Imām ʿAlī (a)."

ʿAlī (a) in the Prophet's House

The Prophet (s) held a deep affection for his cousin ʿAlī (a). At the time of ʿAlī's birth, the Prophet (s) was 30 years old and had been married to Khadīja (a) for five years. The Prophet (s) displayed a paternal love towards ʿAlī (a). According to certain narrations, the Prophet (s) personally washed ʿAlī (a), gently moved his cradle when he was asleep, and affectionately conversed with him while he was awake.[1]

According to renowned hadiths, some members of the Quraysh tribe, including Abū Ṭālib (a), experienced financial difficulties. In response, the Prophet (s), along with ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib and Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, approached Abū Ṭālib (a) to offer assistance, considering his large family. In order to alleviate some of the burden on his uncle, who had taken care of him during his childhood, the Prophet (s) brought ʿAlī (a) into his own household.[2] There is a pertinent report available that appears to be more accurate in this context.[3] According to this report, the Prophet (s) approached his uncle and requested that one of his sons be sent to him, offering assistance in his tasks. Abū Ṭālib (a) granted the Prophet (s) the choice to select any of his sons, and the Prophet (s) chose ʿAlī (a).[4]

Irrespective of the specific reasons why ʿAlī (a) started living in the Prophet's house, it is undeniable that he was indeed raised there, growing up under the care and guidance of his cousin, who was widely recognized for his integrity, virtuous character, and trustworthiness. In the household of the Prophet (s), ʿAlī (a) witnessed the brilliance of Prophethood and breathed its scent.[5] Muhammad served as a compassionate father figure to ʿAlī (a), while ʿAlī (a), in turn, was the most obedient and dutiful son to Muḥammad (s).[6]

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1. Irbilī, *Kashf al-ghumma*, 1: 60; see also Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 13: 200.

2. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 246; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 313.

3. Although this report is widely mentioned in numerous sources and holds recognition, it is subject to objections on various grounds. Earlier, it was mentioned that ʿAlī had three brothers named Ṭālib, ʿAqīl, and Jaʿfar, with a decade separating the birth of each sibling. This implies that Ṭālib was born at the same time as the Prophet, making him 30 years old when ʿAlī was born. Additionally, it can be inferred that ʿAqīl was 20 years old and Jaʿfar was 10 years old at that time. Moreover, the Prophet's household was not any less populated than that of Abū Ṭālib's. At that time, his family included Khadīja's daughter Zaynab, and possibly Ruqayya or Umm Kulthūm as well. Furthermore, the financial hardships faced by the Quraysh affected not only Abū Ṭālib but also extended to other members, including the Prophet, ʿAbbās, and Ḥamza. Taking these factors into consideration, it can be suggested that the Prophet's decision to take custody of ʿAlī was not motivated by relieving Abū Ṭālib's burden, but rather had other underlying reasons (Murtaḍā al-ʿĀmilī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ min Sīrat al-Imām ʿAlī (a)*, 1: 124-27).

4. Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 180.

5. See Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, Sermon 192.

6. See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 13: 200.

The Biʿtha

During the descent of revelation upon the Prophet (s), ʿAlī (a) was there along with him inside the Cave of Hira. In the Sermon of Disparagement (*al-Khuṭbat al-Qāṣiʿa*), Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) states: "Every year he [the Prophet (s)] would retreat to Mount Ḥirāʾ for prayer, where no one but I saw him … I heard Satan's cry when revelation descended on the Messenger, and when I asked, "What is this cry?" he answered me, 'This is Satan, who now despairs of being worshipped. You see what I see and hear what I hear, ʿAlī, though you are not a Prophet (s), but my vizier, and on the path of virtue'."[1]

In Sunni historical and hadith sources, there is a divergence of opinions regarding the age at which ʿAlī (a) embraced Islam or his position among the early Muslims. According to various sources, there are indications that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) may have embraced Islam at some point between the ages of 7 and 16.[2] In his examination of the age at which ʿAlī (a) embraced Islam, al-Masʿūdī (d. 346/957) presents a perspective suggesting that he was five years old when he embraced Islam. Al-Masʿūdī hints at political and sectarian motivations behind this view, stating that "this is the view of those who aim to diminish the virtues and merits of him [=ʿAlī (a)]. [They proposed the view] to portray his conversion to Islam as an action of a young child who may not distinguish between truth and falsehood, doubt and certainty."[3] Some suggest that he converted to Islam between 10 and 12.[4] However, considering that he was born in 599 and the Prophetic mission commenced in 610, it can be inferred that his age at the beginning of the Prophetic mission was approximately 11.

There is also a dispute regarding ʿAlī's position among the early individuals who embraced Islam. While there is a quote attributed to the Prophet (s) addressing ʿAlī (a) and stating "you are the first person who believed in me,"[5] certain sources attempt to present Zayd b. Ḥāritha or Abū Bakr as the first Muslim. It is worth mentioning that the majority of these narrations are transmitted through the accounts of Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī (d. 96/714) and Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742).[6] However, according to certain accounts,

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, Sermon 192.
2. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 15; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 309-17; Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 41; for more information on all historical accounts about that, see Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 25-31.
3. Masʿūdī, *al-Tanbīh wa l-ishrāf*, 198.
4. Jaʿfariyān, *Ḥayāt-i fikrī-yi Imāmān-i Shīʿa* (*a*), 47; see also Vaglieri, "ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib," *EI²*, 1: 381.
5. See e.g. Ibn Abī Khaythama, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 1: 165; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 118; Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 9: 342.
6. See e.g. Ṣaʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, 5: 321; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 32; Ibn Abī shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 371.

Abū Bakr embraced Islam after a group of fifty individuals had already converted.[1] In several hadiths, Imam ʿAlī (a), identifies himself as the first Muslim.[2] This is mentioned in several of his sermons.[3] As one sermon states, "In those days Islam did not exist in any house except that of the Prophet of Allah and his descendants and Khadīja, while I was the third after these two."[4]

The Prophet's Companion

ʿAlī (a) accompanied the Prophet (s) to the outskirts of Mecca and joined him in performing prayers.[5] One of the Prophet's companions, a merchant named ʿAfīf al-Kindī, reported on the early days following the initiation of the Prophetic mission (*biʿtha*). During a business visit to Mecca, ʿAfīf encountered ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib in Mina. While in their interaction, he witnessed a man emerging from a nearby tent and raising his gaze towards the sky. Observing the sun positioned in the middle of the sky, the man proceeded to engage in prayer. Subsequently, a woman and a young teenage boy emerged from the same tent and joined the man in prayer, aligning themselves behind him. Curious about their identities, al-Kindī inquired of ʿAbbās, who then revealed that the man was Muhammad, the boy was ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), Muḥammad's cousin, and the woman was Khadīja bt. Khuwaylid (a), Muḥammad's wife. ʿAfīf al-Kindī proceeded to ask ʿAbbās about was Muḥammad (s) was doing, to which he responded, "He engages in prayer and asserts that he has been sent by God, yet only his wife and cousin follow him."[6]

One day, when Abū Ṭālib (a) had ventured outside the city, he came across his son ʿAlī (a) and his nephew Muḥammad (s) on the outskirts of Mecca. Curious about his nephew's religious beliefs, Abū Ṭālib (a) inquired, and in response, the Prophet (s) described his religion as the true faith. Following that, Abū Ṭālib (a) directed his attention towards his son ʿAlī (a) and asked, "What is the religion you adhere to?" To which ʿAlī (a) replied, "O father! I have faith in God and His messenger." Abū Ṭālib (a) then advised ʿAlī (a), saying, "Beware that he will only summon you to what is right, so follow him."[7]

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1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 316.
2. See e.g. Maʿmar b. Rāshid, *al-Jāmiʿ*, 11: 226, 227; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 306, 406, 408.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, Sermons 57, 71, 131.
4. Ibid., Sermon 192.
5. See Khuṣaybī, *al-Hidāya l-kubrā*, 65; Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 19; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 14: 52.
6. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 3: 306; see also Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 312.
7. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 246-7; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 313-4; Maqdisī, *al-Badʾ wa l-Tārīkh*, 5: 72; Mufīd, *al-Fuṣūl al-mikhtāra*, 283. The issue of the faith of Abū Ṭālib (a), the father of Imam ʿAlī (a), is a point of

The Secret Mission and Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī's Conversion to Islam

At the outset of the Prophet's clandestine mission, ʿAlī (a) stood by his side. As per certain narrations, owing to the persecutions inflicted upon Muslims by the polytheistic Quraysh, the Prophet (s) shifted the center of his covert invitations to Islam to the house of al-Arqam b. Abī l-Arqam, one of the early Muslims. There, in secrecy, he promoted and disseminated the teachings of Islam.[1] ʿAlī (a) accompanied him in al-Arqam's house.

Imam ʿAlī (a) played a pivotal role in facilitating Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī's conversion to Islam by arranging a meeting between him and the Prophet (s). Upon receiving news of the Prophet's mission and his new religion, Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī clandestinely entered Mecca. Lacking acquaintances in the city, he spent several days within Masjid al-Haram, seeking a means to establish communication with the Prophet (s). One day, ʿAlī (a) noticed Abū Dhar, recognizing him as a stranger in the city. He kindly invited Abū Dhar to his own house, offering him hospitality as his guest. Throughout that period, ʿAlī (a) did not inquire about the purpose of Abū Dhar's visit to Mecca, and Abū Dhar himself did not bring up the matter either. The following day, Abū Dhar returned to Masjid al-Ḥarām, where he coincidentally encountered ʿAlī (a) once more. ʿAlī (a) remarked, "It appears that you have not yet found your accommodation." "No," Abū Dhar replied. "What is it that you seek, and what has brought you to this city?" ʿAlī (a) asked, leading Abū Dhar to a secluded corner of the mosque. "If you promise to keep it confidential, I will tell you," Abū Dhar replied. "I promise," ʿAlī (a) agreed. Abū Dhar proceeded to disclose to ʿAlī (a) that he had heard about Muḥammad's claim to Prophethood and had come to the city with the intention of meeting him. "Your wish will be fulfilled as I am heading there now," ʿAlī (a) said, and continued, "Follow me and enter any alley I go into. If I notice anyone suspicious, I will position myself next to a wall and pretend to be repairing my shoes." Together, they made their way to the Prophet (s), who then

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disagreement between Shiʿi and Sunni Muslims. Sunni scholars, citing certain hadiths and events recorded in their sources, deny the faith of Abū Ṭālib (a) and believe that he passed away without believing in the Prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad (a) or the religion of Islam. In contrast, there are narrations from the Shia Imams (a) that explicitly affirm the faith of Abū Ṭālib (a). These narrations, along with historical evidence, have led Shia Muslims to believe in the faith of Abū Ṭālib (a) and declare that he passed away with belief in the Messenger of God (a) (see the chapter "Abū Ṭālib (a): Supporter of the Prophet (s)" in this book). Among the books written to prove the faith of Abū Ṭālib (a) are *al-Ḥujja ʿalā l-dhāhib ilā kufri Abī Ṭālib* by Fakhkhār b. Maʿd al-Mūsawī (d. 630/1233) and *Abū Ṭālib muʾmin Quraysh* by ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlī al-Khumayzī. However, considering the historical development of the denial of Abū Ṭālib's (a) faith, and considering the political events during the Abbasid period, the spread of this idea can be attributed to the Abbasid dynasty. (For more information, see Khaghani, "al-Tayyār al-fikrī al-dāʿim li nafyi imāni Abī Ṭālib; ṭarīq Nājiya b. Kaʿb ʿan ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) fī l-maṣādir al-qurūn al-thalātha l-ʾūlā unmūdhaj[an]").

1. Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā*, 2: 319.

introduced Islam to Abū Dhar. As a result, Abū Dhar embraced Islam through the intercession of Imam ʿAlī (a).[1]

Yawm al-Indhār (The Day of Warning)

As the Prophet (s) initiated his public mission by calling upon his close relatives, ʿAlī (a) stood by his side. Ibn Isḥāq (d. 151/768) has mentioned the event of inviting prominent Quraysh figures after the revelation of the verse "Warn the nearest of your kinsfolk" (Q 26:214), and this event is known as Yawm al-Indhār (the Day of Warning).[2] Following the revelation of the Verse of Warning to the Kindred (*inthār al-ʿashīra*), the Prophet (s) entrusted ʿAlī (a) with the task of inviting his relatives and providing them with sustenance. Under ʿAlī's coordination, the ceremony was organized, and invitations were extended to the Prophet's relatives, which included Abū Ṭālib (a), Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, and Abū Lahab. During the ceremony, after the meal was served, the Prophet (s) began inviting his relatives to Islam. However, due to objections raised by Abū Lahab, the gathering came to an abrupt end. Once again, the Prophet (s) instructed ʿAlī (a) to organize another gathering, with the same individuals in attendance. During this second gathering, the Prophet (s) presented his call to Islam and made the following statement: "Who among you will support me in this matter [the propagation of the religion], so that he may be my brother, my vicegerent, and my successor among you?" As everyone remained silent and refrained from responding, it was ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) who stepped forward and declared his readiness to support the Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) placed his hand on ʿAlī's neck and proclaimed, "Verily, this individual is my vicegerent and successor among you. Therefore, obey him and heed his words." In a mocking manner, the participants turned to Abū Ṭālib and laughed, saying, "He [= the Prophet (s)] is instructing you to listen to your son and obey him."[3]

Valley of Abū Ṭālib

Following the initiation of the Prophet's public mission, which encountered ignorance from polytheists and opposition from the Quraysh, ʿAlī (a) steadfastly accompanied and supported the Prophet (s). A few years later, from seven to ten years after the start of the Prophetic mission (*biʿtha*), which corresponds to 617-20, ʿAlī (a) remained by the side of

1. See Bukhārī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4: 184; al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 382; Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 4: 1653-54.
2. See Ibn Isḥāq, *K. al-Siyar wa l-maghāzī*, 145-46.
3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 319-21; see also Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 582-83, Ḥasakānī, *Shawāhid al-tanzīl*, 1: 485-86; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 49.

the Prophet (s) in Shiʿb Abī Ṭālib (the Valley of Abū Ṭālib).[1] On certain occasions, ʿAlī (a) clandestinely entered the city, procured food, and discreetly transported it into the valley.[2] Moreover, within the valley and as per his father's instructions, he maintained a vigilant watch over Muḥammad (s), ensuring his safety and guarding against any potential harm. While everyone else was asleep, when the Prophet (s) settled into his designated spot, Abū Ṭālib (a) discreetly changed the location for Muḥammad (s). He then requested his son ʿAlī (a) to take the Prophet's place. One night, ʿAlī (a) confided in his father, saying, "O father! Tonight, I [may] be killed." In response, Abū Ṭālib (a) expressed his thoughts through a poem, conveying the following message: "My son, embrace patience, for it is virtuous. I have placed you in a challenging trial on the path of a remarkable individual." In response, ʿAlī (a) composed a poem expressing his sentiments. The poem conveyed the following message: "Do you urge me to be patient in defending Muḥammad? By God, I did not speak out of fear. I wanted you to witness my support for Muḥammad and understand that I still comply with your instruction. I strive to assist the Prophet in every situation, solely for the sake of God."[3]

Abū Ṭālib's Demise

Upon the conclusion of restrictions in the Shiʿb, ten years after the initiation of the prophetic mission (*biʿtha*) in 620, ʿAlī (a) experienced the loss of his father. Overwhelmed by grief, he expressed his sorrow through a heartfelt poem dedicated to the memory of his father.[4] Upon receiving the news of Abū Ṭālib's passing, the Prophet (s) was overcome with profound sorrow. He wiped his hand across his face and stated, "O uncle! You raised me in my childhood, took me under your care when I became an orphan, and supported me in my adulthood. May God bestow upon you a generous reward."[5] The Prophet (s) remarked, "As long as Abū Ṭālib was alive, the Quraysh could not harm me."[6] As some

1. The term "al-shiʿb" literally denotes an area situated between mountains or a valley (Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbbād, *al-Muḥīṭ fī l-lugha*, 1: 294). References to historical sources regarding the city of Mecca during that time indicate that "shiʿb" referred to specific neighborhoods characterized by houses, often named after prominent individuals or owners of those neighborhoods or houses (See e.g. Azraqī, *Akhbār Makka*, 2: 233). Presently, the location of the "al-shiʿb" encompasses a large paved area utilized for prayer and rest by Hajj pilgrims during the Hajj season. Upon leaving Masjid al-Haram through Bāb al-ʿAbbās, Bāb ʿAlī, or Bāb al-Salām, and proceeding through the area of "saʿy," pilgrims reach an expansive paved space located at the foothills of Abū Qubays Mountain (Jaʿfariyān, *Āthār-i Islāmī-yi Makka wa Madīna*, 151).

2. Iskāfī, *al-Miʿyār wa l-muwāzina*, 88.

3. Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 1: 64; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 14: 64.

4. Ibn Isḥāq, *K. al-Siyar wa l-maghāzī*, 239-40.

5. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 35.

6. Ibn Isḥāq, *K. al-Siyar wa l-maghāzī*, 239; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 2: 679.

accounts suggest, Abū Ṭālib (a) consistently assigned a group of Hashimite men to safeguard the life of the Prophet (s).[1]

The period between the deaths of Abū Ṭālib (a) and Khadīja bt. Khuwaylid (a), the Prophet's wife, was brief. Consequently, the Prophet (s) referred to that year as the "Year of Sorrow" (*ʿām al-ḥuzn*), expressing, "Two calamities have befallen this nation, and I do not know which one grieves me more."[2]

Assisting the Prophet (s) in Calling Other Tribes to Islam

Following the passing of Abū Ṭālib (a), the persecution of the Prophet (s) and the Muslims by the Quraysh escalated, rendering Mecca an increasingly unsafe place for them. Therefore, the Prophet (s) began reaching out to ARabīʿan tribes in the vicinity of Mecca, spreading the message of Islam and seeking supporters and believers in his Prophethood. His aim was to gather support from these tribes to counter the pressures imposed by the Quraysh.[3] During the Prophet's journeys to Taif, ʿAlī (a) remained by his side. They presented the teachings of Islam to the tribes near Mecca, including Rabīʿa, Banū Shaybān, and Banū ʿĀmir.[4]

During the Prophet's visit to the Banū ʿĀmir tribe to invite them to Islam, a member of the tribe raised a question, saying, "If we pledge our allegiance to you [by embracing Islam] and God grants you victory over your enemies, will the position [of vicegerent] be ours?" The Prophet (s) replied, "The position will be up to God, and He will place it where He wants to." Consequently, the tribe declined to accept Islam and offer their support to the Prophet (s).[5]

Al-ʿAqaba Pledge

In year 583, a group of 75 individuals from Yathrib traveled to Mecca and met with the Prophet (s). They gathered in an area called al-ʿAqaba and pledged their allegiance to him. Upon receiving news of the event, the disbelievers of Mecca armed themselves with the intention of attacking the group. ʿAlī (a) and the Prophet's uncle, Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (a), made preparations to confront the attackers. Their swift action provided an opportunity for the people from Yathrib to safely escape from the scene.[6]

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1. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 66: 234.
2. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 35.
3. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 422.
4. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 4: 125-28.
5. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 424-25; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 350.
6. Qummī, *Tafsīr*, 1: 273; Ṭabrisī, *Iʿlām al-warā*, 60.

The Pact of Brotherhood in Mecca

According to various accounts, before the migration to Medina (formerly known as Yathrib), the Prophet (s) established a covenant of brotherhood among the Muslims, which was aimed at promoting social justice, a key feature of Islamic governance, and fostering a spirit of solidarity within the emerging Islamic society.[1] Through this covenant, the companions of the Prophet (s) became brothers to one another. As part of this covenant, the Prophet (s) specifically established a bond of brotherhood between himself and ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), declaring, "You are my brother in this world and the hereafter."[2]

Laylat al-Mabīt and Migration to Medina

In year 622, the Prophet (s) embarked on the migration from Mecca to Yathrib, which was henceforth renamed Medina. Before the migration, the polytheists had convened at Dar al-Nadwa in Mecca and conspired to launch a furtive attack on the Prophet's house during the night with the intention of assassinating him. The Prophet (s) became aware of the plot through divine revelation. In order to deceive the polytheists, he instructed ʿAlī (a) to sleep in his place and cover himself with the Prophet's customary blanket. This plan aimed to mislead the attackers into believing that the Prophet (s) was present and sleeping there.[3] According to certain sources, when ʿAlī (a) asked the Prophet (s), "Will you be safe if I sleep in your place?" the Prophet (s) assured him that he would indeed be safe. Upon hearing this affirmative response, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) was filled with joy and gratitude, and prostrated in thankfulness to God.[4] This event is commonly known as Laylat al-Mabīt or"the Night of Sleeping, and it is referenced in numerous historical sources.[5] Some Quranic exegetes believe that the verse "And among the people is he who

1. For more information, see Watt, "Muʾākhāt," *EI²*, 7: 253-54; Sajjādī, and Mihravish, "Barādarī."

2. Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 3: 1098-99; Ḥalabī, *al-Sīra al-Ḥalabiyya*, 2: 125.

3. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 482-83.

4. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 465.

5. See e.g. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 482-83; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 176; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 260; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 372. According to certain sources, during this event, the Prophet (s) instructed ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), saying, "Sleep in my place and cover yourself with my blanket. They [the polytheists] will not do anything to disturb you" (Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 483; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 372; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 3: 176). This account may give the impression that ʿAlī (a) was certain nothing would happen to him, therefore not taking a significant risk. Consequently, some may argue that he does not deserve admiration or honor for this action (see Jāḥiẓ, *al-ʿUthmāniyya*, 44-45). In response to this, Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd (d. 656/1258) quotes his teacher as stating that this particular account is erroneous and distorted, involving the insertion of fabricated text. He further elaborates that this specific portion of the report was fabricated by Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm (d. 201/816-17), who was known for his animosity towards ʿAlī (a) (Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 13: 262-63).

sells his soul seeking the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is most kind to [His] servants"(Q 2:207) was revealed on this occasion.[1]

While the Prophet (s) and Abū Bakr were seeking refuge from the Quraysh in the Thawr Cave, ʿAlī (a) played a crucial role in their safety. He ensured they had access to water and food, and went beyond that by providing three riding animals for their journey to Yathrib, along with a guide.[2]

1. Qummī, *Tafsīr*, 1: 71; Ḥasakānī, *Shawāhid al-tanzīl*, 1: 123, 128-31; see also Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 53.
2. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 68; Ṭabrisī, *Iʿlām al-warā*, 190. Following the events at Saqīfa and during his discussions and debates with the Prophet's companions (*Ṣaḥāba*), ʿAlī (a) reminded them of this fact and they acknowledged it (Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 1: 141).

From the Hijra Until the Prophet's Demise

Upon the Prophet's command, ʿAlī (a) remained in Mecca for three days to return the belongings entrusted to the Prophet (s) by various individuals to their rightful owners. After completing this duty, he joined the Prophet (s) in the Kulthūm b. Hadm house in Qubā'.[1] Accompanying him were three women named Fāṭima (*Fawāṭim*): Fāṭima, the daughter of the Prophet (s), Fāṭima bt. Asad (his own mother), and Fāṭima, the daughter of al-Zubayr b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib.[2] In certain accounts, it is mentioned that Abū Bakr, accompanying the Prophet (s) during the journey to Yathrib (Medina), insisted on entering the city alongside him. However, the Prophet (s) declined his request, stating, "I will not enter Medina until my brother and my daughter [i.e., ʿAlī (a) and Fāṭima (a)] join me." This decision of the Prophet (s) saddened Abū Bakr, leading him to enter Medina on his own.[3]

The Pact of Brotherhood in Medina

A few months after arriving in Medina, during a covenant of brotherhood, the Prophet (s) declared ʿAlī (a) as his brother.[4] During the establishment of bonds of brotherhood among his companions, ʿAlī (a) found himself without a designated brother. He approached the Prophet (s), saying, "O Apostle of God! You have established brotherhood among your companions but left me without a brother." In response, the Prophet (s) assured him, "You are my brother. Would you not like to be called when I am

1. "Qubā/Qubā'" is a village in southern Medina/Yathrib (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 4: 301).
2. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 3: 197; Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 19: 122.
3. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 469; Ṭabrisī, *Iʿlām al-warā*, 66.
4. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 504-5.

called … and to enter heaven when I enter?" ʿAlī (a), delighted, replied, "Yes, O Apostle of God."[1] In another account, the Prophet (s) said to ʿAlī (a), "You are my brother, you inherit me, and I inherit you."[2]

The Marriage to Fāṭima (a)

Following the establishment of the brotherhood covenant, ʿAlī (a) entered into marriage with the Prophet's daughter. However, there is some disagreement regarding the precise timing of their marriage.[3] Prior to that, both Abū Bakr and ʿUmar had expressed their interest in marrying Fāṭima (a). However, the Prophet (s) declined their proposals.[4] When he accepted ʿAlī's proposal to marry Fāṭima (a), those people expressed complaints, to which the Prophet (s) responded by saying, "I did not marry Fāṭima to ʿAlī, but God did."[5] Upon the marriage of ʿAlī (a) and Fāṭima (a), the Prophet (s) asked them to reside in close proximity to him. This arrangement became possible through the selfless act of Ḥāritha b. al-Nuʿmān, who generously offered his own house to ʿAlī (a). As a result, ʿAlī's residence became adjacent to that of the Prophet (s).[6]

When the Prophet (s) sought Fāṭima's opinion on the prospect of her marriage to ʿAlī (a), he expressed to her, "Would it not please you if I marry you to the foremost Muslim, the most knowledgeable, and the most patient?"[7] Furthermore, the Prophet (s) told Fāṭima (a), "God gazed upon the inhabitants of the earth and chose two individuals: one is your father and the other is your husband."[8] Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) expressed his perspective on the marriage by stating, "If God had not created ʿAlī (a) for Fāṭima (a), no one like him would be found on the earth as her equal since the time of Adam."[9]

The day following ʿAlī and Fāṭima's marriage, the Prophet (s) visited their home. Umm Ayman answered the door, and the Prophet (s) inquired, "Where is my brother?" Umm Ayman, puzzled, asked, "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, who is

1. Balādhurī, *ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 144-45.
2. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 16.
3. According to the account of al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941), the marriage took place in 1/622 (Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 340). On the other hand, al-Ṭabarī records the event in 2/623 in one instance (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 410) and in another account, he places it after the Battle of Badr (Ibid., 11: 598). Additionally, in certain sources, it is mentioned that Fāṭima entered ʿAlī's house on Dhu al-Ḥijja 21, 3/June 4, 625 (Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*, 2: 584).
4. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 8: 16; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 614; Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 5: 153, 7: 452.
5. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 41; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 126, 127.
6. See Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 8: 19.
7. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 248; see also Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 33: 422.
8. Ḥakim al-Naysābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 140; Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 4: 418.
9. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 461.

your brother?" The Prophet (s) responded, "'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib." Umm Ayman, still perplexed, questioned, "How can ʿAlī (a) be your brother when you have married him to your daughter?" The Prophet (s) explained, "That is how it is [ʿAlī (a) is my brother], O Umm Ayman."[1]

As a result of this blessed union, ʿAlī (a) and Fāṭima (a) were blessed with three children. The firstborn was Imam al-Ḥasan (a), who entered the world in the middle of the month of Ramadan, 3/March 4, 625.[2] Following that, on the 3rd or 5th of Shaʿbān, 4/January 11 or 13, 626, ʿAlī and Fāṭima welcomed their second child, Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), into the world.[3] It is believed that Zaynab (a), the third child of ʿAlī and Fāṭima, possibly came into the world in Medina during 6/627.[4]

Courage in the Battle of Badr

In Rabīʿ I 2/September 623, during the First Battle of Badr (*Badr al-ulā*),[5] the Prophet (s) pursued Kurz b. Jābir al-Fihrī, who had raided the herds of Medina.[6] During this significant event, ʿAlī (a) held the banner of the Prophet's army.[7] In 2/623, ʿAlī (a) participated in the Battle of Dhāt al-ʿAshīra. It was during this battle that the Prophet (s) bestowed upon him the teknonym "Abū Turāb"[8] and prophesied that he would be martyred at the hands of the most wicked individual.[9]

On the 17th of Ramadan 2/March 17, 624, ʿAlī (a) played a vital role in the Battle of Badr. He was one of the flag-bearers of the Islamic army. On the journey to the Badr area, ʿAlī (a) held a black flag or banner in his hand, notable for a distinctive tuft of white hair. Together with the Prophet (s) and Marthad b. Abī Marthad al-Ghanawī, they took turns riding a camel.[10]

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1. Ibn saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 8: 20; see also Ṣaʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, 5: 485-6; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 452.
2. Ṭabrisī, *Iʿlām al-warā*, 205; Irbilī, *Kashf al-ghumma*, 1: 514.
3. Ṭabrisī, *Iʿlām al-warā*, 214; Irbilī, *Kashf al-ghumma*, 2: 3.
4. Kaḥḥāla, *Aʿlām al-nisāʾ*, 2: 92.
5. In the biography of the Prophet (s), several battles or ghazwas are referred to as "Badr." The first one is known as Ghazwa Badr al-Ūlā (First Battle of Badr), the second one is called Ghazwa Badr al-Kubrā (Major Battle of Badr), and the last one is referred to as Ghazwa Badr al-Mawʿid. Out of the battles known as Badr, the Major Battle of Badr is the one in which a military confrontation took place. In the following text, we will delve into a discussion of this battle.
6. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 1: 12.
7. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 6; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 407; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 3: 247.
8. Ibn Hīshām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 599-600; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 89-90; Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil*, 3: 177.
9. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*ʿ, 2: 686-88; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Āḥād wa l-mathānī*, 1: 147; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 464.
10. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 613.

On the eve of the Battle of Badr, the Prophet (s) addressed his companions, asking, "Who will fetch water for us?" In the face of fear and silence, it was ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) who stepped forward, volunteering for the task. In the cover of the pitch-black night, he made his way to a deep well, descended into it, and provided water to the weary army.[1] According to certain accounts of the event, it is believed that during that time, God commanded the angels to descend upon the earth and convey greetings and peace to ʿAlī (a).[2]

When the Muslim army reached Badr, Muḥammad (s) dispatched ʿAlī (a), accompanied by al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām and Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, for an overnight reconnaissance mission to gather intelligence on the Quraysh army.[3] At the beginning of the battle, ʿUtba b. Rabīʿa, Shayba b. Rabīʿa, and al-Walīd b. ʿUtba issued challenges to engage in one-on-one combat with Muslim warriors. In response to Muhammad's command, ʿAlī (a), Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (a), and ʿUbayda b. al-Ḥārith stepped forward to confront them. ʿAlī (a) and Ḥamza (a) defeated their opponents in combat. Ḥamza vanquished al-Walīd, while ʿAlī (a) emerged victorious against ʿUtba. Upon realizing that ʿUbayda had sustained injuries, they killed Shayba as well. Furthermore, ʿAlī (a) was also responsible for the elimination of several other individuals during the Battle of Badr.[4] According to various reports, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) displayed such extraordinary courage and gallantry in the midst of the battle that the polytheists bestowed upon him the nickname "the red death" (*al-mawt al-aḥmar*).[5]

Loyalty during the Battle of Uḥud

In the month of Shawwāl 3/March 625, ʿAlī (a) participated in the Battle of Uhud. When Muṣʿab b. ʿUmayr fell in battle, ʿAlī (a) held the banner of the Muhājirūn (Immigrants). Demonstrating exceptional bravery, he delivered a sword strike to the head of Ṭalḥa b. Abī Ṭalḥa, the standard-bearer for the Meccans. After Ṭalḥa was struck and fell to the ground, his lower body became exposed. Feeling a sense of shame, ʿAlī (a) chose not to deliver a final blow. However, Ṭalḥa later succumbed to the injuries he sustained from the sword strike and died. As the war progressed, ʿAlī (a) eliminated the flag-bearers of the polytheist army one by one.

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1. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 613; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 337.
2. See Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 242.
3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 436.
4. For more information about the casualties of the Battle of Badr, see Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 1: 138-44, 147-52; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 708-16, 2: 3-8; see also Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 70-72.
5. Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 68.

Despite their initial successes in the Battle of Uḥud, the Muslims ultimately suffered a significant defeat since, despite the Prophet's explicit instructions for the appointed guards to hold their position at the Uḥud pass, they deviated from his orders. Khālid b. al-Walīd seized the opportunity, infiltrated the pass, outflanked the Islamic army, and inflicted injuries upon them. Following the attack, the Prophet (s) fell into a pit. A soldier from the polytheist army, who had martyred Muṣʿab b. ʿUmayr under the mistaken belief that he had killed the Prophet (s), spread a false rumor of the Prophet's demise. The rumor about the Prophet's death disheartened certain Muslims, leading them to flee from the battlefield.[1] Through an examination, evaluation, and comparison of historical accounts, one can argue that among the companions, it was only ʿAlī (a) who staunchly stood by the side of the Prophet (s) and defended him.[2]

Witnessing the Muslims fleeing from the battlefield, the Prophet (s) called out their names one by one, urging them to return and continue fighting, but despite his pleas, none of them heeded his words.[3] Feeling sorrowful over the flight of his army, the Prophet (s) turned to ʿAlī (a) and inquired why he had not fled. In response, ʿAlī (a) replied, "Shall I turn back from faith after having embraced Islam? There is an exemplar

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1. The following Quranic verse was revealed in response to this situation: "When you were fleeing without paying any attention to anyone, while the Apostle was calling you from your rear, He requited you with grief upon grief" (Q 3: 153). The names of those who fled during the Battle of Uḥud have been censored in historical sources as they included specific names. Marsden Jones, the critical editor of *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* by al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823), suggests the presence of censorship regarding the names of those who fled the battlefield. Jones speculates that the original manuscript of the book included the names of ʿUmar and ʿUthmān among the fugitives (Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, Introduction: 18). Reference to certain Sunni sources of hadith reveals that names such as Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān appear among the fugitives of the Battle of Uḥud. For instance, in a hadith, Abū Bakr is quoted as acknowledging that he was the first to return to the Prophet (s), indicating that he had indeed fled the battlefield (Ibn Mubārak, *al-Jihād*, 77-78; Ṭayālisī, *Musnad*, 1: 8; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 163; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, 1: 222; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 11: 69). Furthermore, according to a hadith, ʿUmar confesses that during the Battle of Uḥud, he ascended the mountain in a manner akin to that of a nanny goat (Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 4: 96; Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, 2: 88; Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā*, 4: 206). Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd (d. 656/1258) references a hadith from al-Wāqidī that lists the names of the individuals who fled from Uḥud, including ʿUmar. In another instance, Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd suggests that during the Ḥudaybiyya peace treaty in 6/628, when the Prophet (s) addressed ʿUmar and reminded him of his companions' retreat from the battlefield of Uḥud (Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 609), it serves as evidence of ʿUmar's own flight during the Battle of Uḥud (Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 15: 24-25). The name of ʿUthmān appears in numerous sources as one of those who fled the Battle of Uḥud (See e.g. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 522; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 4: 28). Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) records that ʿUthmān fled from Medina and remained outside of the city for three days (Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, 193-94). During the coup against ʿUthmān's government, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf reminded ʿUthmān of his fleeing during the Battle of Uḥud (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 1: 525; Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 3: 1032).

2. See Murtaḍā al-ʿāmilī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ min Sīrat al-Nabī al-aʿẓam*, 7: 173-86; Murtaḍā al-ʿāmilī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ min Sīrat al-Imām ʿAlī (a)*, 3: 174-89.

3. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 1: 237.

for me in you."[1] ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) valiantly defended the Prophet (s), bravely repelling the attacks of the polytheist warriors who assailed him from all directions. In certain accounts, during those critical moments, Gabriel conveyed to the Prophet (s), "O Muhammad! Indeed, this is true assistance. The angels are amazed by the valorous assistance of this hero." The Prophet (s) responded, "What could prevent him from doing so, as he is from me and I am from him." Gabriel added, "I too am from you."[2] As Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī (a) valiantly battled the polytheists, a celestial proclamation resounded through the air: "There is no hero like ʿAlī, and no sword like Dhū al-Fiqār."[3] Due to his unwavering defense of the Prophet (s), ʿAlī (a) sustained numerous injuries. According to reports, he suffered over 60 wounds. In a remarkable display of divine healing, the Prophet (s) wiped his hand over ʿAlī's wounds, and miraculously, they were all completely cured, leaving no trace of injury.[4]

After the conclusion of the war, as the disbelievers prepared to return to their homes, the Prophet (s) entrusted ʿAlī (a) with the task of gathering intelligence on the status and intentions of Abū Sufyān's army. Upon gathering intelligence, ʿAlī (a) discovered that the enemy intended to retreat. With great joy, he brought this news to the Prophet (s). Earlier, before ʿAlī's return, the Prophet (s) had informed his companions, "A man from heaven will appear to you." When ʿAlī (a) returned, he gave him the good tidings of going to the heaven.[5]

ʿAlīʿs Donation of His Ring

During the initial years following the migration (*hijra*) to Medina,[6] a contingent of Jews approached the Prophet (s) and declared their embrace of Islam. They inquired of the Prophet (s) regarding his successor and said, "O Messenger of God! Who will be your successor and our guardian after you?" In response to their question, the following verse was revealed: "Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain

1. Ṭabrisī, *Iʿlām al-warā*, 82.

2. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 557; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 197; Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 110.

3. See e.g. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 101; Qummī, *Tafsīr*, 1: 116; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 514. According to certain sources, this incident took place during the Battle of Badr (See e.g. Ibn ʿArafa, *Juzʾ*, 62; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 71). Furthermore, Amīr al-Muʾminīn referenced this event in his debates with those who usurped his rightful claim to the caliphate (Ṭabarī al-Amulī al-Kabīr, *al-Mustarshid*, 348; Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 2: 550, 557; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 39: 201).

4. Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 119-20.

5. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 1: 329-30. For more information about the battle of Uḥud, see Ibid., 1: 199-334, Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 60-129; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 78-90.

6. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 516-17; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 266.

the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down" (Q 5:55). As they accompanied the Prophet (s) to the mosque, they witnessed a destitute man departing from the premises. The Prophet (s) inquired, "Did anyone assist you?" The man replied, "Yes, I was given this ring (*khātam*)." The Prophet (s) asked, "Who donated it to you?" The man responded, "The man who was engrossed in prayer inside the mosque." Curious, the Prophet (s) asked, "In what position was he when he helped you?" The man replied, "He assisted me while he was in the posture of *rukūʿ* (bowing)." Upon hearing this account, the Prophet (s) recited the chant of *takbīr* ("*Allāh akbar*"), and those present around him joined in the chant.[1] Ḥassān b. Thābit crafted a poem commemorating the event.[2]

Fāṭima bt. Asad's Demise

In the year 4/625, Fāṭima bt. Asad (a), the mother of ʿAlī (a), passed away. She had cared for and nurtured the Prophet (s) during his early years, assuming the role of a devoted and selfless mother figure to him. She was among the early Muslims who migrated to Medina and earned continuous honor and esteem from the Prophet (s). He held her in high regard and affectionately referred to her as "mother."[3]

While stating that Fāṭima bt. Asad (a) was like a mother to him, the Prophet (s) dedicated his own turban and garment for use as her burial shroud. He personally led the funeral prayer for her and recited 40 *takbīr*s. The Prophet (s) himself descended into the grave of Fāṭima bt. Asad (a) and placed some soil into it. Witnessing this extraordinary act, ʿAmmār b. Yāsir was filled with curiosity and approached the Prophet (s) to inquire about the reason behind his actions. In response to ʿAmmār's inquiry, the Prophet (s) conveyed, "She deserves this … O ʿAmmār! When I glanced towards my right side, I beheld 40 rows of angels, and for each row, I recited one takbīr. … In her grave, I supplicated to God, beseeching Him to keep Fāṭima covered on the Day of Resurrection. … O ʿAmmār! By God, I witnessed two radiant lights at her feet, accompanied by two dedicated angels who will continuously seek forgiveness for her until the Day of Resurrection."[4]

According to a particular account, after the burial of Fāṭima bt. Asad (a), the Prophet (s) lingered by her grave and spoke certain words. Upon his return, his companions approached him and remarked, "O Messenger of God! Today you did something that we

1. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 124; Ḥasakānī, *Shawāhid al-tanzīl*, 1: 334-35; see also Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 356-57; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat al-khawāṣ*, 24-25.
2. Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat al-khawāṣ*, 25.
3. See pages 6-7 in this book.
4. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 314-5. In some accounts the questioner was ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 116).

have not witnessed from you before." In response, the Prophet (s) explained that Fāṭima bt. Asad (a) had expressed concerns about the constriction of the grave. In order to alleviate her worries, he stayed by her grave for a while. Then, the Prophet (s) revealed, "She was questioned about God and His messenger, and she responded. However, when she was asked about her Imam, she hesitated to answer. Therefore, at her gravesite, I called out loudly, 'Your son, your son, your son'."[1]

Valor in the Battle of the Confederates

In Shawwāl of 5/February 627, during the Battle of Confederates (*al-Aḥzāb*) or Battle of the Trench (*al-Khandaq*),[2] ʿAlī (a) once again held the position of being the flag-bearer of the Islamic army, as he had done in most of the previous battles.[3] After digging a ditch at the suggestion of Salmān al-Fārsī, ʿAlī (a) and a group of the Companions took charge of protecting the passages of the ditch to prevent the Meccan army from crossing.[4] When ʿAmr b. ʿAbd Wadd[5] managed to cross the trench, he boldly issued a challenge to the Muslim warriors by reciting three paeans. However, among the Muslim ranks, it was only ʿAlī (a) who fearlessly stepped forward. On the third occasion when Ibn ʿAbd Wadd issued a challenge to the companions, the Prophet (s) declared, "Whoever engages in combat with ʿAmr, I guarantee Paradise for him on behalf of God." However, despite the Prophet's assurance, none of the companions stepped forward except for ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a).[6]

The Prophet (s) entrusted his own sword to ʿAlī (a), placed his own turban upon ʿAlī's head, offered a prayer for his success, and then dispatched him to confront ʿAmr in battle. As ʿAlī (a) prepared to enter the battlefield, the Prophet (s) beseeched God in prayer,

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1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 453-54.

2. The Battle of Confederates or the Trench was initiated by the polytheists, who were incited by exiled Jews to wage war against the Muslims. In an effort to unite the idolatrous tribes of Hijaz, the polytheists assembled a formidable army with the intention of eradicating Islam. Salmān al-Fārsī, a trusted companion, proposed the idea of digging a defensive trench (*khandaq*) surrounding the city of Medina to safeguard against a surprise attack by the polytheist forces (Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 441-45).

3. Ṭabrisī, *Iʿlām al-warā*, 190.

4. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 224.

5. ʿAmr b. ʿAbd b. Abī Qays b. ʿAbd Wadd was a renowned Quraysh horseman. Regarded as a formidable figure in Arab warriorship, it was said that his valor and prowess on the battlefield were equivalent to that of a thousand cavaliers combined. ʿAmr b. ʿAmr b. ʿAbd b. Abī Qays b. ʿAbd Wadd earned the title of the "Warrior of Yalyal" after he and other Quraysh cavaliers confronted a group of warriors from the Banu Bakr tribe in the Yalyal plains near the Badr region. In this event, ʿAmr single-handedly defeated the enemy warriors without requiring the assistance of his comrades (Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 3: 135; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, 14: 237; Diyār Bakrī, *Tārīkh al-khamīs*, 1: 486).

6. Karājakī, *Kanz al-fawāʾid*, 1: 297.

saying, "O God! Grant ʿAlī Your assistance against him."[1] On another account, as ʿAlī (a) was heading towards the battlefield, the Prophet (s) declared, "The entirety of faith confronts the entirety of polytheism in this battle."[2]

On foot, ʿAlī (a) approached the battlefield and presented ʿAmr with three options: to embrace Islam, engage in combat, or return to his homeland. Enraged by these words, ʿAmr dismounted from his horse and engaged in a fierce battle with ʿAlī (a), ultimately resulting in his own death.[3] In a particular account, when ʿAmr b. ʿAbd Wadd was on the verge of defeat, ʿAlī (a) momentarily paused the fight, hesitating to deliver the final blow. The Muslim soldiers observing the scene from a distance were puzzled by this pause, and some of them voiced their objections and concerns. After Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī (a) finally emerged victorious over ʿAmr, the Prophet (s) inquired about the reason for his momentary pause before delivering the final blow. In response, ʿAlī (a) explained, "He [ʿAmr b. Abd Wadd] cursed my mother and spat on my face. I was concerned that I would defeat him out of personal anger. Therefore, I waited for a brief moment and then vanquished him, solely for the sake of God."[4] Regarding ʿAlī (a)'s encounter with ʿAmr b. ʿAbd Wadd, the Prophet (s) remarked, "The battle of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) against ʿAmr b. ʿAbd Wadd on the day of the trench surpasses the collective deeds of my followers until the Day of Resurrection."[5] Furthermore, in another hadith, the Prophet (s) stated, "Any single strike delivered by ʿAlī on the day of the trench surpasses the collective acts of worship performed by both humans and jinn."[6]

Upon the Prophet's return from the Battle of Confederates on Dhū l-Qaʿda 23rd, 5/April 15, 627, he issued a command for the Muslims to proceed towards the forts of the Banū Qurayẓa, a Jewish tribe, in order to exert control over them.[7] Initially, the Prophet

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1. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 470-71; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 19: 63.
2. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 13: 261, 285, 19: 61.
3. For more information about the battle of Aḥzāb, see Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 441-73; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 94-108.
4. Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 115.
5. Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 34.
6. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*, 1: 467.
7. Prior to the Battle of Confederates, which was instigated by the influence of the Jews exiled to Khaybar, Ḥuyay b. Akhṭab, a leader of the Banū al-Naḍīr Jewish tribe, made a pledge to assist the polytheists. It is noteworthy that the Banū al-Naḍīr tribe was the largest Jewish tribe during that period. Consequently, Ḥuyay sought out Kaʿb b. Asad, the leader of the Banū Qurayẓa tribe, and urged him to violate the treaty he had previously agreed upon with the Prophet (s) and join forces with the polytheists. In the presence of his tribe members, Kaʿb tore apart the treaty. The Prophet (s) and the Muslims received news of the treaty breach by the Banū Qurayẓa just before the arrival of the polytheist forces. This development further compounded their concerns, as they found themselves compelled to confront enemies on two fronts. However, it is important to note that during the Battle of Confederates, the Banū Qurayẓa were unable to inflict harm upon the Muslims. After the conclusion of the conflict, Gabriel appeared

(s) dispatched ʿAlī (a) and a group of 30 individuals from the Khazraj tribe to the forts of the Banū Qurayẓa in order to assess the tribe's readiness for war.[1] As ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) positioned his flag near the forts of the Banū Qurayẓa, the Jewish inhabitants responded by directing curses towards the Prophet (s) and his wives.[2] Furthermore, there are reports that when the Banū Qurayẓa Jews caught sight of ʿAlī (a), they exclaimed in fear, saying, "The killer of ʿAmr [b. ʿAbd Wadd] has come to us."[3] During the course of the battle, the fort of the Banū Qurayẓa proved to be unconquerable until one day when ʿAlī (a) made a solemn oath, vowing to capture the fort or meet a martyrdom similar to that of Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib. Faced with this formidable determination, the Jews became apprehensive and sent a representative to the Prophet (s), seeking a guarantee of safety for their tribe.[4]

The Treaty of Ḥudaybiyya

In the month of Dhū l-Qaʿda in the year 6/March-April 628, the Prophet (s), along with a group of Muhājirūn (lit. "Emigrants," i.e., early Meccan converts to Islam who emigrated to Medina) and Anṣār (lit. "Helpers," i.e., early Medinan Muslims who helped and supported the Prophet's cause), departed from Medina to perform the Umrah pilgrimage. They became *muḥrim*[5] in the region of Dhū l-Ḥulayfa. ʿAlī (a) was among the group that embarked on the pilgrimage. However, upon their arrival, the Quraysh refused to grant them permission to perform the pilgrimage. As a result, the group relocated to the site of the Pledge of the Tree. Subsequently, an agreement was reached to establish a peace pact called the Ḥudaybiyya Peace Treaty between Muḥammad (s) and the Quraysh. The responsibility of drafting the peace treaty on behalf of the Prophet (s) was entrusted to Imam ʿAlī (a). During the negotiations for the Ḥudaybiyya Peace Treaty, the representative of the Quraysh objected to the inclusion of the phrases "in the name of Allah, the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful" and "Muḥammad, the Apostle of Allah."

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to the Prophet and revealed a divine commandment to fight against the Banū Qurayẓa (Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 441-42, 454-59, 497-99; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 214, 220-22, 233-35; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 50-51, 57).

1. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 109.

2. For more information about the battle of Banū Qurayẓa, see Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 496-521; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 223-39; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 109-13.

3. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 109.

4. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 240.

5. "Muḥrim" refers to an individual who enters into a state of ritual consecration by donning a special garment, known as "Iḥrām," for the purpose of performing the Hajj pilgrimage.

As per the Prophet's instructions, ʿAlī (a) modified the phrases to "in Your name, O Allah" and "Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allah."[1]

Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī, an eyewitness to the event, reports that during the time at al-Ḥudaybiyya, the Prophet (s) firmly grasped ʿAlī (a)'s hand and proclaimed in a loud voice, "This [ʿAlī (a)] is the commander of the righteous, and the vanquisher of the wicked. Whoever supports him will receive [divine] assistance, and whoever abandons him will be forsaken [by God]. I am the city of knowledge, and ʿAlī (a) is its gate. Whoever seeks knowledge must pass through this gate."[2]

During this journey, when the Muslims reached the al-Juḥfa area, they faced a shortage of drinking water. The Prophet (s) dispatched a group of individuals to retrieve water from a nearby spring. However, due to their apprehension of a potential surprise attack by the enemy, all of them returned empty-handed. Finally, the Prophet (s) entrusted the task to ʿAlī (a), who ventured to the spring and successfully fetched ample water for the Muslim camp. The Prophet (s) welcomed ʿAlī (a) by reciting *takbīr* and offering prayeds for him.[3]

Valor in the Battle of Khaybar

In Muḥarram 7/May-June 628,[4] the Prophet (s) and the Muslims departed Medina for the Battle of Khaybar.[5] As the Prophet (s) resolved to launch an attack on the Fort of Khaybar, he appointed ʿAlī (a) as the vanguard of his army. The Prophet (s) proclaimed, "Any Jew who seeks refuge among the palm trees will be granted safety." ʿAlī (a) echoed this declaration. During this period, according to certain accounts, the Prophet (s) witnessed

1. For more information, see Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 571-633; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 308-22; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 119-24.

2. Ibn al-Muqri', *al-Muʿjam*, 84-85; see also Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 140.

3. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 121-22.

4. Al-Wāqidī documents one account stating that the departure took place in the month of Ṣafar/June-July, while another account suggests Rabiʿ I/July-August. Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845), on the other hand, believes that the event occurred in the month of Jumādā I/September-October (Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 634; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 81).

5. The Muslims faced ongoing military threats from the Jewish community in Khaybar. Folowing ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib's expedition to Fadak and the unsuccessful attempt by Banū Saʿd b. Bakr, the Prophet (s) organized another expedition led by ʿAbd Allāh b. Rawāḥa. This group was tasked with conducting a reconnaissance mission to gather information about the status of the inhabitants of Khaybar. During this crucial expedition, the nefarious plots of the Jewish community to launch attacks against the Muslims were thwarted, due to the combined efforts of the Prophet (s) and the dedicated Muslim participants in the expedition (Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 566-68). Despite the ongoing military threats from the Jews, they maintained their persistence in plotting against the Muslims. Their defensive fortifications gave them a false sense of security, leading them to believe that the Muslims would not dare to wage war against them. Consequently, until the eve of the Muslim attack, none of the Jews were aware of the impending conflict (Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmāʿ*, 1: 306).

Gabriel wearing a smile and inquired about the cause behind it. In response, Gabriel expressed, "It is because I hold great love for him [ʿAlī (a)]." When the Prophet (s) shared this with ʿAlī (a), he responded, "Did I just hear that Gabriel loves me?" The Prophet (s) confirmed, saying, "Yes, and not only Gabriel but also someone greater: God, the esteemed and the glorified."[1]

As a result of the Jewish resistance, the Muslim army encountered challenges in capturing one of the forts of Khaybar, specifically known as al-Qamūṣ. Initially, the Prophet (s) sent Abū Bakr and others to the fort, but their efforts were unsuccessful. Subsequently, he assigned ʿUmar and his companions to the task, but they too returned without success, exchanging accusations of cowardice among themselves. Then the Prophet (s) stated, "If God wills, tomorrow I will entrust the flag to someone who consistently engages in attacks [against the enemies of Islam], never fleeing [the battlefield]. This individual possesses immense love for God and His Messenger, and in turn, God and His Messenger hold great love for him. He shall not retreat until God grants victory by his own hands, conquering the fort."[2] On the following day, the Prophet (s) called upon ʿAlī (a), but the companions informed him that ʿAlī (a) was experiencing discomfort in his eyes. Nevertheless, Imam ʿAlī (a) approached the Prophet (s), who miraculously healed his eyes by wiping his saliva upon them. Subsequently, the Prophet (s) entrusted the flag to ʿAlī (a) and bestowed prayers upon him.[3]

ʿAlī (a) swiftly made his way to the battlefield. As he raised the flag near the fort, one of the Jewish defenders inquired, "Who are you?" ʿAlī (a) confidently replied, "I am ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib." Astonished, the Jew exclaimed, "By all that has been revealed to Moses, you have triumphed over us."[4] Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) entered the battlefield, defeating Marḥab al-Khaybarī, a renowned Jewish warrior.[5] Moreover, during the Battle of

1. Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 2: 427.

2. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 56.

3. The event is described in various wordings across numerous Shiite and Sunni sources of hadith and history. In this context, we will focus on presenting a selection of significant firsthand Sunni sources: Maʿmar b. Rāshid, *Jāmiʿ*, 11: 228; Ṭayālisī, *Musnad*, 4: 187-88; Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 653; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 334; Saʿīd b. Manṣūr, *Sunan*, 2: 215; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 84, 85; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 366, 367, 367, 369, 370, 7: 392, 393, 394, 396; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 584, 593, 602-3, 604, 605, 607, 611, 618, 659; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4: 54, 60, 5: 18, 134, 7: 72-73, 8: 158-59, 9: 18.

4. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 335.

5. There are differing accounts regarding the individual who vanquished Marḥab al-Khaybarī. Some suggest that Muḥammad b. Maslama was the one who eliminated him (Ibid., 2: 233-34), while others contend that it was ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) (Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 85-86; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 56). Moreover, there are also those who believe that both ʿAlī (a) and Muḥammad b. Maslama jointly participated in his downfall (Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 655-56). Notably, in most Sunni sources of hadiths, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) is recognized as the one who killed Marḥab (see e.g.

Khaybar, when a group of Jews launched a collective attack on ʿAlī (a), he demonstrated his remarkable strength by lifting a gate and utilizing it as a shield. After setting the gate aside, it became evident that even a group of eight men could not budge it from its position.[1] After the event, ʿAlī (a) remarked, "I did not l uproot the gate of Khaybar with physical power, but with divine power."[2] In another hadith, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) was asked "O Abū l-Ḥasan! You uprooted that heavy gate while you had not eaten much meal for three days. Did you do so with human power?" In response, ʿAlī (a) expressed, "It was not by mere human strength that I accomplished this, but rather through the power of the divine and with a heart firmly assured by divine assistance."[3]

When the Prophet (s) decide to distribute the spoils from the forts of al-Naṭāt and al-Shiqq among the Muslims, he designated a supervisor for each group of 100 individuals to oversee the distribution of grains and wheat among their respective group members. ʿAlī (a) was one of those supervisors.[4] The Prophet (s) allocated 300 loads of dates and barley from the revenues of al-Katība, one of the forts of Khaybar, specifically for Fāṭima (a) and ʿAlī (a). Out of this allocation, 200 loads were designated for Fāṭima (a), while the remaining portion was given to ʿAlī (a).[5]

Furthermore, it is reported that Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib arrived in Khaybar from Abyssinia, presenting a gift to the Prophet (s) in the form of a brocade garment (*qaṭīfa*) and some perfume. The Prophet (s) declared, "I shall bestow this brocade garment upon someone who holds immense love for God and His Messenger, and is reciprocated with love from God and His Messenger." Then, he summoned ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) and bestowed upon him the brocade garment as a gift. Upon his return to Medina, ʿAlī (a) entrusted the garment to a skilled goldsmith, instructing him to remove the golden threads from it. The

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Saʿīd b. Manṣūr, *Sunan*, 2: 306; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 7: 392-93, 393-94, 396; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 27: 67-69, 38: 139; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3: 1433-39; Ibn Abī ʿAṣim, *al-Sunna*, 2: 608; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 412, 8: 16).

1. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 253-54; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 335; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 2: 220. According to certain sources, the gate was so incredibly heavy that even a significant group of 40 to 70 individuals combined could not manage to move it from its position (Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 399; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 333; Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 439, 552). Due to weaknesses in the chains of transmission of these narrations, some individuals express doubts regarding their authenticity (Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-niyāya*, 4: 189-90). Al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1441) refutes this objection by highlighting that the account is mentioned in Ibn Isḥāq's (d. 151/768) biography of the Prophet (a). Furthermore, he provides evidence by mentioning the memorizers of the Quran who transmitted the narration. Additionally, Al-Maqrīzī cites an account through Imam al-Bāqir (a), which asserts that even a group of 40 people together were unable to move the gate from its position (Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmāʿ*, 1: 310).

2. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 514; Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 21: 436.

3. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 307.

4. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 689-90, 718.

5. Ibid., 2: 693-94.

amount of gold extracted from the garment was equivalent to 1000 mithqals, which ʿAlī (a) subsequently distributed among the impoverished Muhājirūn and Anṣār.[1]

The Story of Returning the Sun

According to reports, upon returning from Khaybar to Medina, the Prophet (s) fell asleep with his head resting on ʿAlī's lap following the the afternoon prayer. Being considerate, ʿAlī (a) chose not to disturb the Prophet's sleep.[2] Before falling asleep, the Prophet (s) was aware that ʿAlī (a) had not yet performed the afternoon prayer. When he woke up, he inquired, "O ʿAlī! Did you offer the prayer?" ʿAlī (a) responded, "No." The Prophet (s) then prayed and beseeched, saying, "O God! ʿAlī has dedicated his life to obeying You and Your messenger. Bring back the sun for him." Unexpectedly, the sun, which had already set, miraculously returned to the sky, allowing ʿAlī (a) to perform his prayer.[3] In certain sources of hadith and historical accounts, this event is commonly referred to as *radd al-shams* or the return of the sun.

The Conquest of Mecca

During the Ramadan, 8/December-January 630-31, ʿAlī (a) played a pivotal role in the Conquest of Mecca. After the conquest, Abū Sufyān, acknowledging his kinship with ʿAlī (a), approached him on two occasions, seeking a means to extend the Ḥudaybiyya Peace Treaty. Abū Sufyān's intention was to enlist ʿAlī's support in persuading the Prophet (s) to prolong the period of peace, but his efforts proved unfruitful.[4] ʿAlī (a) advised him,

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1. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 614-15; see also Yūsufī al-Gharavī, *Mawsūʿat al-Tārīkh al-Islāmī*, 3: 56-57.

2. According to some reports, the Prophet (s) received revelations during this sleep.

3. Ṣadūq, *Man lā yaḥḍuruh al-faqīh*, 1: 203; see also Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 4: 562; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 345-46; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 314; Irbilī, *Kashf al-ghumma*, 178. Despite Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201) citing this hadith in his work *al-Mawḍūʿāt*, and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) strongly criticizing its authenticity (Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Mawḍūʿāt*, 1: 355-57; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 6: 77-80, 281-83). On other hand, al-Maqrīzī transmitted this hadith through different narrators such as Abū Hurayra, Asmāʾ bt. ʿUmays, and ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), with variations in wording and chains of transmission (Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmāʿ*, 5: 26-33). Furthermore, al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347) documented that al-Ḥākim al-Ḥasakānī (d. 490/1097) authored a book specifically dedicated to examining the authenticity of this hadith (Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 32: 306). Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (d. 544/1149) affirmed the authenticity of this hadith, as he deemed the transmitters to be trustworthy and reliable (Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ b. Mūsā, *al-Shifā*, 1: 548-49). Al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449) also considered this hadith to be reliable and criticized Ibn al-Jawzī for incorrectly classifying it as fabricated (ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, 6: 222).

4. Abū Sufyān's visit to Medina with the intention of extending the peace pact was motivated by a deep-rooted animosity between the Banū Khuzāʿa and Banū Nufātha tribes. While the Banū Khuzāʿa were counted as allies of the Prophet (s) due to a treaty they had with his grandfather, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, the Banū Nufātha were aligned with the Quraysh polytheists. Consequently, following the Ḥudaybiyya Peace Treaty, hostilities between the two tribes came to an end. In 8/629, despite the relatively recent peace treaty (only two years), a dispute arose between an individual from Banū Khuzāʿa and a man from Banū Nufātha, resulting in the latter being injured. Seeking

saying, "I solemnly swear by God, there is no escape from this situation for you. As the prominent leader of Banū Kināna, it is in your best interest to declare peace on your own behalf and return to your homeland ... I cannot envision any alternative course of action for you." Abū Sufyān followed ʿAlī's advice and returned to Mecca, openly stating that he did so based on ʿAlī's counsel. However, upon sharing this decision with his wife Hind, she reproached him, and others began to spread skepticism, claiming that "ʿAlī has cunningly played with you."[1]

The Prophet (s) made deliberate efforts to conceal his intentions of attacking Mecca from the polytheists.[2] However, the Prophet (s) discovered that Ḥāṭib b. Abī Baltaʿa had attempted to inform the Quraysh about his plans by sending a letter through a female slave. Ḥāṭib's motivation behind this act was to alleviate pressures on his wife and children who still resided in Mecca. Upon receiving divine revelation regarding Ḥāṭib's actions, the Prophet (s) immediately summoned ʿAlī (a) and entrusted him with the task of pursuing the female slave. Additionally, he requested al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām to accompany ʿAlī (a) on this mission. Pursuing the woman, ʿAlī (a) and al-Zubayr eventually caught up with her in Dhū l-Ḥulayfa. Initially, the woman denied having any knowledge of the letter's existence. However, due to the unwavering conviction of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) in the truthfulness of the Prophet's words, he persisted in his pursuit. Eventually, ʿAlī (a) managed to retrieve the letter from her. As a result, the Quraysh remained oblivious to the movements of the Muslim army as they made their way towards Mecca.[3]

En route to Mecca, the Prophet (s) made a stop at a location known as Biʾr Abī ʿInaba, near Medina,[4] where he established a camp. At this point, he entrusted one of the flags of the Muhājirūn to ʿAlī (a). Then, the Prophet (s) issued the order for the army to advance towards Mecca.[5] Upon the Muslims' entry into Mecca, several companions of

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retribution, members of Banū Nufātha approached the Quraysh and requested their assistance in seeking revenge against Banū Khuzāʿa. Influential members of the Quraysh, acting independently and without consulting Abū Sufyān, joined forces with Banū Nufātha and launched an attack on Banū Khuzāʿa in the Watīr area. Due to the cover of darkness, they mistakenly believed that their identities would remain concealed. During this attack, they killed people from Banū Khuzāʿa. With ti's act, the Quraysh violated the peace treaty. As a proactive measure, Abū Sufyān made a visit to Medina with the intention of extending the peace treaty. His objective was to secure immunity against the consequences of any potential violation of the Ḥudaybiyya Peace Treaty (Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 782-84).

1. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 792-95; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 132-34.
2. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 56.
3. Ibid., 1: 57; see also Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 399.
4. Hamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 1: 301.
5. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 800.

the Prophet (s) approached him and informed him that Saʿd b. ʿUbāda, the leader of the Khazraj tribe, had recited a valorous chant, conveying a sense of vengeance, rallying people to engage in the slaughter of the Meccan populace. The Prophet (s) instructed ʿAlī (a) as follows: "Meet Saʿd, take the flag from him, and you be the one who enters Mecca." ʿAlī (a) conformed to the Prophet's command.[1]

Abū Sufyān b. al-Ḥārith was the Prophet's cousin, being the son of his paternal uncle, as well as his breastfeeding (or foster) brother. He was of the same age as the Prophet (s) and had been a close friend prior to the Prophet's Prophetic mission. However, following the initiation of the Prophetic mission, Abū Sufyān b. al-Ḥārith spared no efforts to persecute the Prophet (s) and Muslims for a span 20 years.[2] During the Conquest of Mecca, he, along with ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, approached the Prophet (s) to sincerely express his remorse and repentance. ʿAlī (a) recommended to Abū Sufyān b. al-Ḥārith that he should visit the Prophet (s) and recount the words spoken by Prophet (s) Joseph's brothers when they sought his forgiveness (the verse, "By Allah, Allah has certainly preferred you over us, and we have indeed been erring "(Q 12:91)), as this would bring satisfaction to the Prophet (s). Thus, the Prophet (s) accepted the repentance of Abū Sufyān b. al-Ḥārith, leading to his conversion to Islam.[3]

When Mecca was conquered on Ramadan 20, 8/January 11, 630, ʿAlī (a) ascended the roof of the Kaaba by respectfully climbing onto the Prophet's shoulder and then toppled the idols there. At this point, the Prophet (s) recited the following verse "The truth has come, and falsehood has vanished. Indeed falsehood is bound to vanish" (Q 17:81).[4] Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) recounted the event, stating, "The Prophet (s) guided me to the Kaaba, … and he said, 'O ʿAlī! Stand upon my shoulder!' As I obeyed, a sense of surged within me that I could reach the sky. I ascended the Kaaba, and the Prophet (s) commanded, 'Overturn their idol.' … I dismantled the foundations of the idol and brought it crashing down."[5]

Compensating of the Losses Caused by Khālid b. al-Walīd

After the Conquest of Mecca, Prophet Muḥammad (s) organized various expeditions, one of which involved Khālid b. al-Walīd leading a raid on the Banū Jadhīma clan in the

1. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabaeiyya*, 2: 406-7; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 134-35 According to an account by al-Wāqidī, the flag was actually entrusted to Qays b. Saʿd, the son of Saʿd b. ʿUbāda (Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 821-22).
2. Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmāʿ*, 1: 356.
3. Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 4: 1674; Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 22: 259.
4. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 138; see also Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 361; Ṣadūq, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, 2: 238.
5. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 7: 403-4; Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 140.

al-Ghumayṣā' region. This event took place in Shawwāl, 8/January-February, 630. Using deceptive tactics, he cunningly captured and executed individuals who had embraced Islam, and then plundered their belongings.[1] Prophet (s) dispatched ʿAlī (a) to visit the tribe and provide compensation for the losses incurred as a result of Khālid's actions. ʿAlī (a) diligently fulfilled this task by paying the blood money for all the victims, returning their property and belongings, ensuring they received their rightful entitlements, and issuing just verdicts on disputed matters. Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a) sent Abū Rāfiʿ to the Prophet (s) to ask for more money. Once the funds arrived and the compensations were paid, ʿAlī (a) distributed the remaining amount among the members of the tribe, taking into consideration the possibility of any undisclosed losses that may have gone unnoticed by the Banū Jadhīma. Subsequently, ʿAlī (a) returned to the Prophet (s) and provided him with a detailed account of the events that had transpired.[2] The Prophet (s) expressed his admiration for 'Alī's efforts, proclaiming, "What you have accomplished is dearer to me than 'red camels' [*ḥumr al-niʿam*, which metaphorically refers to the most precious treasures]. May my father and mother be sacrificed for you."[3]

The Battle of Ḥunayn

In Shawwāl, 8/January-February 630, ʿAlī (a) played an active role in the Battle of Ḥunayn,[4] where he joined forces with the Prophet (s) in a military engagement against the Hawāzin tribe. During this significant battle, ʿAlī (a) carried one of the flags of the Muslim army.[5] Amidst the chaos of the battle, when some Muslims began to flee,[6] ʿAlī (a), along with notable individuals like ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib and al-Faḍl b. ʿAbbās, stood firmly by the side of the Prophet (s). In this critical moment, ʿAlī (a) managed to

1. The Prophet had dispatched Khālid b. al-Walīd to engage with the Banū Jadhīma with the intention of inviting them to embrace Islam. Despite their conversion and public display of prayer, and in contradiction to the Prophet's explicit instructions to safeguard the lives and property of fellow Muslims, Khālid proceeded to unjustly execute many of them, seize their possessions, and capture their women and children. The news deeply grieved the Prophet, and he raised his hands towards the sky, uttering, "O God! I dissociate myself from the actions committed by Khālid" (Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 3: 875-81).

2. Ibid, 3: 822; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 430; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 55-56.

3. Yaqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 61.

4. Upon hearing of the successful conquest of Mecca by the Prophet and the Muslim army, the Hawāzin and Thaqīf tribes, led by a young and arrogant man named Mālik b. ʿAwf, resolved to launch a preemptive strike against the Muslims. Becoming aware of the Hawāzin's plans for a surprise attack, the Prophet led an army of 12,000 warriors to confront them. The battle between the two forces took place in Ḥunayn (Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 3: 885-90).

5. Ibid., 3: 895.

6. This act of fleeing is referred to in the following verse "Allah has certainly helped you in many situations, and on the day of Hunayn, when your great number impressed you, but it did not avail you in any way, and the earth became narrow for you in spite of its expanse, whereupon you turned your backs [to flee]" (Q 9: 25).

slay the standard-bearer of the Hawāzin.[1] On some accounts, ʿAlī (a) displayed extraordinary prowess and vanquished 40 adversaries single-handedly.[2]

The Prophet's Private Conversation with ʿAlī (a)

During Shawwāl 8/January-February 630, ʿAlī (a) stood alongside the Prophet (s) as they embarked on the Battle of Taif and laid siege to the Thaqīf tribe.[3] During the siege of Taif, ʿAlī (a) was assigned by the Prophet (s) to lead an expedition aimed at dismantling and destroying the idols of the Khathʿam clan. During the conflicts that took place in that region, Imam ʿAlī (a) defeated a renowned warrior from the tribe and, upon dismantling their idols, he rejoined the Prophet (s). Upon ʿAlī's arrival, the Prophet (s) recited the *takbīr* and had a private conversation with him for a period of time.[4]

According to a hadith, when their private conversation extended, a few of the Prophet's companions expressed their dissatisfaction, saying, "Why do you hold whispered conversations with him and not with us? Why do you have private meetings with him and not with us?" In response, the Prophet (s) clarified, saying, "I did not engage in a whispered conversation with him, but rather, it was God who did."[5]

Verse 12 of Surah al-Mujādala (58) in the Quran is commonly referred to as Najwā Verse or the Verse of Whispered Conversation. The verses says: "O you who have faith! When you converse privately with the Apostle, offer a charity before your private talk. That is better for you and purer. But if you cannot afford [to make the offering], then Allah is indeed all-forgiving, all-merciful". Among the companions of the Prophet (s), the only one who adhered to the instructions of this verse was ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a). In this regard, he stated, "Neither before me nor after me did anyone comply with this verse. I possessed only one dinar, which I exchanged for 10 dirhams. For each instance of private conversation with the Prophet (s), I donated one dirham until it was all depleted."[6]

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1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 62-63; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 142-43.
2. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 144; Irbilī, *Kashf al-ghumma*, 1: 223.
3. Following the Battle of Ḥunayn, the polytheists from the Thaqīf tribe who managed to escape sought refuge in the fortified city of Taif (*al-Ṭāʾif*). The Prophet, accompanied by the Islamic army, pursued them all the way to Taif and initiated a siege (Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 478).
4. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 152; Ṭabrisī, *Iʿlām al-warā*, 199.
5. Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd stated that the objector was ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 153). However, other sources do not specify any names and instead refer to "some individuals" who raised objections (see e.g. Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 6: 85; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Sunna*, 2: 598; Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, 1: 441).
6. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 377; see also Qāsim b. Sallām, *al-Nāsikh wa l-mansūkh*, 259.

Mission to Destroy the Idolatrous Temple of al-Fuls

In Rabīʿ II 9/July-August 630, the Prophet (s) assigned ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) with the responsibility of leading an expedition to the Ṭayyiʾ tribe. Upon demolishing the idolatrous temple of al-Fuls,[1] and upon capturing ʿAdī b. Ḥātim's sister and acquiring spoils, ʿAlī (a) made his way back. During the journey, he distributed the spoils among his comrades, ensuring to set aside the appropriate *khums* (one-fifth portion).[2] The Prophet (s) sent ʿAlī (a) with a force of 150 men, none of whom were from the Anṣār, along with 100 swords and 50 horses, to dismantle the idol known as al-Fuls and its associated temple. Accompanied by his comrades, ʿAlī (a) embarked on the mission while holding a black flag (*Rāyatun sawdāʾ*) and a white flag (*liwāʾun abyaḍ*).[3] To maintain secrecy, ʿAlī (a) and his companions traveled under the cover of night, employing reconnaissance missions to gather information. During one such mission, they encountered an adolescent boy who provided valuable intelligence. With the boy's guidance, they launched a night raid that lasted until morning, resulting in the acquisition of numerous spoils. Subsequently, ʿAlī (a) liberated those captives who had embraced Islam, dismantled the idolatrous temple of al-Fuls, and discovered spoils within its treasury.[4]

While being held captive in Medina, ʿAdī b. Ḥātim's sister had multiple conversations with the Prophet (s) to negotiate her release. She recounted to the Prophet (s) the passing of her father and the flight of her sole provider, her brother ʿAdī. Over the course of three consecutive days, she implored the Prophet (s) to grant her release with utmost kindness. On the fourth day, upon the recommendation of ʿAlī (a), she approached the Prophet (s)

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1. The idol known as al-Fuls, along with its associated idolatrous temple, held significant prominence in the Hijaz region (Ibn al-Kalbī, *al-Aṣnām*, 59).

2. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 124.

3. Some scholars make a distinction between *liwāʾ* and *rāya*, both of which mean flag in Arabic. They propose that a *liwāʾ* refers to a piece of cloth that is tied or wrapped around the head of a spear or a long wooden pole. On the other hand, a *rāya* is a piece of cloth attached to a wooden stick or spear, with only one side connected, allowing it to move with the wind or during movement, much like modern flags. carried by the commander of an army. It signifies the presence of the commander, and wherever the commander is, the *liwāʾ* must also be present. On the other hand, *rāya* refers to flags that are positioned near commanders in the battlefield. Furthermore, there are reports indicating that each tribe during the era of the Prophet had its distinct *rāya* (ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, 4: 575). However, some other scholars consider *liwāʾ* and *rāya* to be synonymous (for more information, see ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, 6: 126-27).

4. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 3: 983-88.

once more. Finally, the Prophet (s) granted her release and bestowed generous gifts upon her. Upon receiving this news, ʿAdī returned and embraced Islam.[1]

Ḥadīth al-Manzila

During Rajab 9/October-November 630, the Prophet (s) received intelligence regarding the military situation involving the Roman king. This prompted him to make the strategic decision to confront them in Tabuk, located at the border of the Roman Empire.[2] Amid concerns regarding the hypocrites who had chosen to remain in Medina, abstaining from joining the expedition to Tabuk, the Prophet (s) summoned ʿAlī (a) and said: "Either you stay [in Medina], or I stay." Consequently, he appointed Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) in his place in Medina.[3] Meanwhile, the hypocrites started making sarcastic remarks, suggesting that the Prophet (s) found ʿAlī's presence burdensome and deliberately left him behind to relieve himself of the burden.[4]

Upon hearing these sarcastic comments, and perhaps to dispel any unfounded rumors, ʿAlī (a) promptly departed from the city to reunite with Muḥammad (s). He caught up with the Prophet (s) in al-Jurf and relayed to him the false information spread by the hypocrites. Refuting those allegations, the Prophet (s) reassured ʿAlī (a), saying, "Would you not desire a position with me similar to the position of Aaron with Moses, with the exception that there will be no Prophet after me?"[5] According to some hadiths,

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1. Ibid., 3: 988-89. ʿAdī b. Ḥātim was the son of Ḥātim al-Ṭāʾī, was a well-known Arab philanthropist during the pre-Islamic era known as the Age of Ignorance or *Jāhiliyya*. He was known for his generosity and his steadfast commitment to abstaining from wine and adultery. Before the advent of Islam, ʿAdī had renounced idolatry and embraced Christianity. After embracing Islam, he transformed into a magnanimous philanthropist, and an unwavering companion of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a). He fought side by side in the historic battles of al-Jamal and Ṣiffīn. Tragically, he suffered the loss of one of his eyes during the Battle of al-Jamal. In the presence of Muʿāwiya, he expressed his deep affection and admiration for ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), meticulously enumerating the myriad reasons that showcased his remarkable superiority. ʿAdī passed away in the year 68/687-88 (Ibn al-Kalbī, *al-Aṣnām*, 61; Ḍubbī, *Akhbār al-wāfidīn*, 23-25; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 99; Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, 156, 241).

2. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 3: 983-88.

3. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 17; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 95-96. According to certain sources, it is recorded that the Prophet (s) conveyed to ʿAlī (a): "Indeed, [the affairs of] Medina can only be properly managed either by me or by you." (Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 2: 367; Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, 1: 561). Al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 292/905) further asserts that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) held the position of the Prophet's successor in Medina (Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 67). According to Ibrāhīm Bayḍūn, the presence of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) in Medina suggests that the Prophet (s) had prior knowledge that no war would occur in Tabuk (Bayḍūn, *al-Imām ʿAlī*, 34). Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd provides a similar account (Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 154).

4. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 519.

5. Ibid., 2: 520; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 17; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 104. This incident is also narrated in many Suni hadith sources. See e.g. Maʿmar b. Rāshid, *Jāmiʿ*, 11: 226; Ṭayālisī, *Musnad*, 1: 167, 170, 173; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5: 19, 6: 3; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4: 1780, 1871; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1: 83; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 3: 83, 88, 89.

the Prophet (s) subsequently told ʿAlī (a): "you are my successor among all believers after me."[1] This statement by the Prophet (s), directed towards ʿAlī (a), is commonly referred to as "Hadith al-Manzila" (lit. "Hadith of the Status").

A comprehensive examination of hadith sources reveals that the Hadith of the Position was not only conveyed by the Prophet (s) during the Battle of Tabuk but also on various other occasions. According to a hadith transmitted from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), the Prophet (s) reiterated this statement to ʿAlī (a) on ten separate instances.[2] According tosome reports, this hadith was reiterated during events such as the Day of Warning (*Yawm al-Indhār*),[3] the Brotherhood Covenant,[4] the event of Closing the Doors (*Sadd al-Abwāb*),[5] the Conquest of Khaybar,[6] the selection of a guardian for the daughter of Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib in 7/629,[7] as well as in an address to Umm Salama and in praise of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a).[8] ʿAllāma Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā Jaʿfarī (d. 2010) thoroughly examines the chains of transmission of this hadith, presents evidence for its frequent transmission (*tawātur*), and elaborates on the underlying concepts within this hadith. Furthermore, he contends that the hadith signifies the exalted position of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) and provides compelling evidence for his rightful claim to guardianship and caliphate following the passing of the Prophet (s).[9]

Proclamation of Surah al-Barāʾa

The opening verses of Surah al-Barāʾa or al-Tawba (9) were revealed to the Prophet (s) towards the conclusion of the year 9/631.[10] God commanded him to proclaim these verses

1. Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Sunna*, 2: 603.
2. Qundūzī, *Yanābīʿ al-mawadda*, 2: 302-3.
3. Karājakī, *Kanz al-fawāʾid*, 2: 177-78.
4. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 663.
5. See pages 44-45 in this book.
6. Ibn al-Maghāzilī, *Manāqib*, 305-6.
7. The account of the guardianship of ʿUmāra bt. Ḥamza unfolded as follows: After the signing of the Ḥudaybiyya Peace Treaty, when the Muslims embarked on an Umrah pilgrimage to Mecca the following year, it was Imam ʿAlī who proposed that ʿUmāra, the daughter of Ḥamza, join them as they left the city. Following the martyrdom of Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib in the Battle of Uḥud, a disagreement emerged among his immediate relatives, including Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib and ʿAlī. The Prophet intervened and acted as an arbitrator to resolve the dispute. He carefully evaluated the qualities and capabilities of each party involved and ultimately entrusted the guardianship of ʿUmāra to Jaʿfar (Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 738-39).
8. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 42, 169. For more information, see Rayshahrī, *Mawsūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī*, 2: 152-62.
9. See Jaʿfarī, *Buḥūth ḥawl al-Imāma: Ḥadīth al-Manzila*.
10. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 543-44; ʿAyyāshī, *al-Tafsīr*, 2: 73.

to the polytheistic community during the Hajj season of the same year.[1] Initially, the Prophet (s) entrusted Abū Bakr with the responsibility of commanding the Hajj pilgrimage and proclaiming these verses. However, shortly thereafter, he called upon ʿAlī (a) and instructed him to replace Abū Bakr in delivering the message of the verses. Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), caught up with Abū Bakr in al-Juḥfa and conveyed the Prophet's message to him. He then personally took on the responsibility of proclaiming the verses.[2] Following this incident, Abū Bakr returned to the Prophet (s) with apprehension and anxiety, asking, "O Messenger of God, has any verse been revealed concerning me?" The Prophet (s) responded, "No, but Gabriel came to me and conveyed, 'Your message must be delivered by either yourself or a man from you'."[3] In the afternoon of Eid al-Adha, ʿAlī (a) arrived in Mecca, identifying himself as a representative of the Prophet (s), and proceeded to deliver the verses to those in attendance.[4]

While the majority of historical sources tend to portray Abū Bakr as still being the commander of the Hajj pilgrimage and ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) solely as a messenger for conveying the verses, there are some accounts that indicate Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) was also entrusted with the leadership of the Hajj pilgrimage.[5] According to a particular account, when the Prophet (s) sent ʿAlī (a) to intercept Abū Bakr, he instructed him, saying, "Catch up with him and then tell Abū Bakr to come back to me."[6]

The act of conveying the verses of Surah al-Barāʾa is regarded as a significant virtue of Imam ʿAlī (a) in both Shiite[7] and Sunni[8] sources. Moreover, the event is documented in numerous sources as a frequently transmitted narration.[9] During his debates with other companions of the Prophet (s) regarding the caliphate or succession after the Prophet (s), ʿAlī (a) invoked this event as evidence of his superiority.[10]

The Event of Mubāhala

Approximately in 9/630-31, the Prophet (s) composed a letter addressed to the Christians of Najran, inviting them to embrace Islam. Since the representatives of Najran in Medina

1. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 5: 36-37.
2. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 3: 1077.
3. Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, 2: 154-55; Qāsim b. Sallām, *al-Amwāl*, 215; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 2: 472.
4. Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 7: 357.
5. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 383; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 76.
6. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 1: 183.
7. See e.g. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 65; Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 126.
8. See e.g. Khʷārazmī, *al-Manāqib*, 164; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 7: 357.
9. Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 6: 338-41.
10. Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 1: 144.

did not embrace Islam after hearing the words of the Prophet (s), he proposed a *mubāhala* (a mutual cursing)[1] to them. The following day, upon witnessing the Prophet's arrival accompanied by ʿAlī (a), Fāṭima (a), Imam al-Ḥasan (a), and Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) for the *mubāhala*, the Christians of Najran decided against participating in the *mubāhala*. Instead, they reached an agreement to pay annual taxes, known as *jizya*.[2]

The instruction to engage in *mubāhala* with the Christians of Najran was revealed to the Prophet (s) as verse 61 of Surah Āl ʿImrān (3): "Should anyone argue with you concerning him, after the knowledge that has come to you, say, 'Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our souls and your souls, then let us pray earnestly, and call down Allah's curse upon the liars'."[3] Following the revelation of this verse, the Prophet (s) appeared for the *mubāhala* accompanied by ʿAlī (a), Fāṭima (a), al-Ḥasan (a), and al-Ḥusayn (a), declaring, "These are my household (Ahl al-Bayt)."[4] According to a hadith narrated by ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, in this verse, the term "sons" refers to al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (a), "women" refers to Fāṭima (a), and "our souls" refers to ʿAlī (a). After citing this hadith, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405/1015) further mentions that following the gathering for the *mubāhala*, the Prophet (s) stated, "These are our sons, our souls, and our women. You should also bring your souls, your sons, and your women so that we may engage in *mubāhala* and invoke Allah's curse upon the liars." Al-Naysābūrī asserts that this account is frequently transmitted (*mutawātir*) in various Quranic exegeses.[5]

When the Christians of Najran chose not to participate in the *mubāhala* and agreed to pay *jizya* (an annual tax), the Prophet (s) reached a compromise with them, involving the Christians of Najran offering 2,000 valuable garments, each worth 40 dirhams. Furthermore, he established a peace pact with them to solidify the agreement, and it was

1. "Mubāhala" was a practice in which two groups, when faced with a disagreement, would gather in a designated place and invoke curses upon the group that was unjust or dishonest (Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, 11: 72). The story of the Mubāhala incident unfolded as follows: Upon receiving the Prophet's letter, the Christians of Najran, accompanied by certain priests and leaders, traveled to Medina. They engaged in a debate with the Prophet (s) concerning matters such as belief in prophethood and the nature of Jesus' creation. Ultimately, this debate culminated in the proposal of a *mubāhala*.

2. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4: 1871; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 167-68.

3. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 82.

4. Muslīm, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4: 1871; Timidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 6: 83; Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 66.

5. Ḥākim, *Maʿrifat ʿulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 50.

written by ʿAlī (a).[1] After some time, the Prophet (s) sent ʿAlī (a) to the lands of Najran to collect the *jizya* from the residents there.[2]

The Event of Closing the Doors

When the Prophet (s) constructed houses for his wives adjacent to the mosque, some of his companions also built houses there. In addition to having doors opening towards the outside, these houses were designed with doors that opened towards the inside of the mosque, providing a direct entrance to the mosque. By God's command, the Prophet (s) was instructed to close all the doors except the door of ʿAlī's house. This event became known as *sadd al-abwāb* or Closing the Doors.[3] The event has been cited in many sources.[4]

Upon hearing this commandment, some Muslims expressed complaints. In response, the Prophet (s) stated, "I have been instructed to close all these doors except for the door of ʿAlī's house. You have spoken about this matter. I swear by God that I did not give any order to open or close a door on my own accord. I have been entrusted with a task, and I have simply carried it out."[5] According to some hadiths, in response to the objections of his companions, the Prophet (s) emphasized the command by reiterating the Hadith al-Manzila.[6]

Given that the Prophet's uncle ʿAbbās was among those who objected to the closing of the doors,[7] and taking into account that ʿAbbās migrated to Medina after the Conquest of Mecca,[8] it can be inferred that the incident likely occurred after the conquest, around 9/630-31.

The Death of Ibrāhīm, the Prophet's Son

ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās is quoted as saying that Gabriel descended upon the Prophet (s) while he was besides his son Ibrāhīm and his grandson al-Ḥusayn (a). The Prophet (s)

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1. Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 72-73.
2. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 600.
3. The event is widely transmitted and cited in both Shiite and Sunni sources as a virtue of Imam ʿAlī (a). During the Six-Member Council convened to select the caliphate successor after the death of ʿUmar, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) invoked this virtue of his (see Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 3: 213).
4. See e.g. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 369; Balāthurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 106; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 417, 424; Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 558; Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 190-92.
5. Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 424; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 7: 342.
6. Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal al-sharāʾiʿ*, 2: 202.
7. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 176; Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 2: 144; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 424.
8. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 355; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 3: 61.

stated, "Gabriel descended upon me and conveyed the message from God, saying, 'God sends His greetings and informs you that He will not keep both of them alive for you, so choose one over the other'." The Prophet (s) gazed at both Ibrāhīm and al-Ḥusayn (a), tears streaming from his eyes, and then expressed, "If Ibrāhīm passes away, only I will experience the sorrow. However, al-Ḥusayn's mother is Fāṭima, and his father is ʿAlī, my cousin and of my own flesh and blood. If he were to die, it would deeply grieve my daughter, my cousin, and myself. Therefore, I choose to bear my sadness rather than theirs."[1] Three days later, in Rabīʿ II 10/June-July 631, the Prophet's son, Ibrāhīm, passed away.[2] ʿAlī (a) took the responsibility of shrouding and burying Ibrāhīm. The Prophet (s) instructed ʿAlī (a), saying, "Rise and perform the shrouding and burial of my son ... enter the grave and place a tombstone over it."[3]

The Expeditions to Yemen

Around 8 or 9/631, ʿAlī (a) led a group of 300 horsemen to the al-Nakhaʿ clan and other neighboring clans. Following their successful defeat and the establishment of a peace pact, he returned to the Prophet (s). Furthermore, after Khālid b. al-Walīd's unsuccessful attempt, the Prophet (s) assigned ʿAlī (a) with the task of traveling to Yemen to invite the Hamdān tribe to embrace Islam. ʿAlī (a) successfully conveyed the message of Islam, and as a result, all members of the Hamdān tribe embraced the faith and converted to Islam. Afterwards, ʿAlī (a) gained dominance over the Madhḥij tribe and engaged in adjudicating their cases.[4] Upon Amīr al-Muʾminīn's allocation of a portion of the spoils

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1. Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 2: 201; Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 4: 81.

2. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad, the Prophet's son, was born to Māriya al-Qibṭiya, a slave woman who was gifted to the Prophet (s) by al-Muqawqis, the ruler of Egypt. Ibrāhīm was born in Dhū l-Hijja 8/March-April 630 in Medina. The Prophet (s) underwent profound grief upon his son's passing (for more information, see Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 107-15).

3. Barqī, *al-Maḥāsin*, 2: 3313-14; Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 3: 208.

4. It is worth mentioning that while Ibn Hishām (d. 213/828) and Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/785) do not provide specific dates, they state that ʿAlī (a) led two expeditions to Yemen (Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabaeiyya*, 2: 641; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 128). Nevertheless, it is widely reported in numerous sources that Amīr al-Muʾminīn's expedition to Yemen took place in 10/631, following Khālid b. al-Walīd's unsuccessful attempt to persuade the Yemenite tribe of Hamdān (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 131-32; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 2: 300; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*. 1: 690-91). That being said, upon closer examination of the events, it becomes evident that the expedition actually occurred around 8-9/630, following the Battle of Taif. The Hamdān tribe, which was the intended target of the expedition, sent a letter along with other tribes to the Prophet (s), expressing their conversion to Islam. This letter was delivered to the Prophet (s) upon his return to Medina with the Islamic army from Tabuk. The tribes' declaration of their conversion to Islam took place in 9/630 (Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 588-90; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 120-21). However, according to al-Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī (d. 942/1535-36), the expedition led by ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), following Khālid's unsuccessful attempt in Yemen, actually took place after the Battle of Taif, which transpired in Shawwāl of

for himself, Khālid b. al-Walīd voiced his criticism of ʿAlī (a), conveying it to the Prophet (s) via Burayda b. Ḥuṣayb al-Aslamī. In response, the Prophet (s) said, "[O Burayda!] What is permissible from the spoils for me is also permissible for him. ʿAlī is the best person for you and your tribe, and he is the best person I leave behind for all people after me. O Burayda! Refrain from harboring hostility towards ʿAlī, for if you do so, it will incur the anger of God upon you."[1] Furthermore, according to some accounts, the Prophet (s) subsequently said, "he is your guardian after me."[2]

In Sunni sources of hadith, the event is recorded with various narrations as transmitted from Burayda b. Ḥuṣayb, each with different wording. As the bearer of Khālid's letter, Burayda spoke ill of ʿAlī (a) in the presence of the Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) became furious and admonished, "Do not slander ʿAlī, for he is from me and I am from him. He is your guardian after me."[3] In another hadith, Burayda quotes the Prophet (s) as saying, "Whoever I am the guardian of, ʿAlī is also his guardian."[4] In yet another hadith, the Prophet (s) said, "O Burayda! Am I not more entitled to the believers than they are to themselves?" Burayda replied, "Yes." The Prophet (s) then declared, "Whoever I am the master of, ʿAlī is also his master."[5] Furthermore, Burayda recounts the event by stating, "I had resentment towards ʿAlī (a) in my heart. Suddenly, the Prophet (s) approached me and asked, 'O Burayda! Do you bear animosity towards ʿAlī?' I replied, 'Yes.' Then he said, 'Do not bear any animosity towards him, for ʿAlī's portion of the *khums* is greater than this'."[6]

In 10/631, the Prophet (s) sent ʿAlī (a) to Yemen for the second time, directing him to establish a camp in the Qubāʾ region and await the arrival of his companions. The Prophet (s) personally wrapped a turban on ʿAlī's head, saying, "When you reach their land, do not engage in fighting unless they initiate it against you ... Invite them to embrace the declaration 'There is no god but Allah.' If they accept, invite them to establish prayers, and if they accept, invite them to give charity to the poor. If they agree

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8/January 630 (Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā*, 6: 236). The subsequent expedition of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) to Yemen, specifically targeting the Madhḥij tribe.

1. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 160-61. Al-Barrāʾ b. ʿĀzib also narrates a hadith regarding this incident, stating that when the Prophet read Khālid's letter, he remarked, "What are these words you are uttering about a man who loves God and His messenger?" (Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 372; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 3: 359, 6: 84).

2. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 189.

3. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 38: 117-18; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 441; see also Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 10: 282.

4. Maʿmar b. Rāshid, *Jāmiʿ*, 11: 225; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 38: 58, 133; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 437.

5. Ibn Abī Shahba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 274; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 38: 32; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 309, 437, 438.

6. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 38: 65, 144; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5: 163; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 443.

to all these, refrain from asking anything more from them. I swear by God that if through your efforts, one person is guided, it would be better for you than [possessing] everything on Earth." ʿAlī (a) advanced with a contingent of 300 horsemen. In the vicinity of Yemen, they acquired some spoils, which ʿAlī (a) entrusted to Burayda b. Ḥuṣayb al-Aslamī. Initially, ʿAlī (a) extended an invitation to them to embrace Islam, but when they responded by launching a barrage of arrows, he led an assault with 20 warriors. Consequently, they repelled the attackers, and ʿAlī (a) renewed his call to Islam. This time, some of them accepted and embraced the faith. Subsequently, some of ʿAlī's companions requested the distribution of the spoils, but he responded, "We will present the *khums* possessions to the Prophet so that he may distribute them accordingly." Imam ʿAlī (a) hastened his return from Yemen to join the Prophet (s) near Mecca in order to participate in the Hajj rituals ahead of his companions. Upon the arrival of the Muslim caravan, Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a) noticed that, based on the requests of certain army members and commanders, Abū Rāfiʿ had distributed the spoils among them, resulting in their adorning themselves with new garments. Rebuking Abū Rāfiʿ, ʿAlī (a) commanded his army to take off the garments they had acquired. This action displeased some of them, who subsequently expressed their grievances about ʿAlī (a) in the presence of the Prophet (s).[1] The Prophet (s), in support of ʿAlī (a), addressed the complainants, saying, "Do not voice your complaints against ʿAlī. I swear by God that he is strict on the path of God."[2]

This incident occurred during the final expedition led by ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) to Yemen. Based on the hadiths transmitted by ʿAmr b. Shās regarding the complaints against Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a), it can be inferred that ʿAlī (a) undertook three expeditions to Yemen. In the initial expedition, the incident involving Khālid b. al-Walīd's letter took place, while in the final expedition, which coincided with the Prophet's presence in Mecca, the episode involving the distribution of the *khums* possessions by Abū Rāfiʿ unfolded. However, in the narration of ʿAmr b. Shās, neither of these two stories is mentioned. According to ʿAmr, "I accompanied ʿAlī to Yemen, where I faced an injustice that led to me harboring resentment towards ʿAlī. Upon returning to Medina, I expressed my complaint in the mosque, and through word of mouth, it eventually reached the Prophet (s). The following day, when I went to the mosque, the Prophet (s) looked at me and said, 'O ʿAmr! You have caused me pain.' I responded, 'O Messenger of God! I seek

1. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghazī*, 3: 1079-83; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, 4: 5; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *ʿUyūn al-athar*, 2: 341.
2. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 603; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 18: 337.

refuge with God if I have caused you pain.' The Prophet (s) affirmed, "Yes, whoever hurts ʿAlī has hurt me."[1]

ʿImrān b. Ḥuṣayn states, possibly referring to another expedition to Yemen, that the Prophet (s) appointed ʿAlī (a) as the leader of an expedition. Four of his companions became discontented due to an incident and planned to lodge a complaint against ʿAlī (a) upon their return to Medina. In response, the Prophet (s) intervened and said, "Leave ʿAlī alone. Indeed, he is from me and I am from him. He is the guardian of all believers after me."[2]

ʿAlī's Arbitrations in Yemen

When the Prophet (s) sent ʿAlī (a) to Yemen, ʿAlī (a) expressed his concern, saying, "How can you send me to people who are older than me?" The Prophet (s) placed his hand on ʿAlī's chest and replied, "Indeed, God guides your heart and makes your tongue truthful. If two individuals come to you seeking judgment, do not pass a judgment on the first person until you have heard the words of the second person. This will help you arrive at a clear judgment." ʿAlī (a) remarked, "After that, I never had any doubts in my arbitration."[3]

Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, one of the companions of the Prophet (s), narrates: "I accompanied ʿAlī (a) in Yemen ... He was not rigid with people [regarding the collection of *zakat*]. He would frequently visit their dwellings [to assess the *zakat* due on their livestock]. He appointed representatives to gather their *zakat*, distribute it to the needy, and educate them [about the regulations of *zakat*]." In a separate incident, a group of individuals in Yemen had dug a pit, which inadvertently trapped a lion. As people gathered around the pit, a person accidentally fell into it, dragging three others along. All four individuals were vanquished at the hands of the lion. People exclaimed, "The responsibility for the blood money of those three individuals lies with the first person who caused their death." At that moment, ʿAlī (a) happened to be passing by. He responded, "Regarding the first person, one-fourth of the blood money must be paid, as three others were killed after him. For the second individual, one-third of the blood

1. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt* (*al-ṭabaqa al-rābiʿa*), 514; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 371; Fasawī, *al-Maʿrifa wa l-Tārīkh*, 1: 329-30.

2. Ṭayālisī, *Musnad*, 2: 168; Timidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 6: 73; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 440. Al-Albānī (d. 1999) one of the most important Sunni hadith scholars has considered this hadith to be correct (*ṣaḥīḥ*) (Albānī, *Silsilat al-aḥādīth al-ṣaḥīḥa*, 5: 262-64).

3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 101; see also Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 257; Abū Dāwud, *Sunan*, 3: 301; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 421, 422.

money must be paid, as he caused the death of two others. As for the third person, half of the blood money must be paid, since one person was killed after him. And finally, for the last person, the full blood money must be paid." Shortly after, the people of Yemen encountered the Prophet (s) during the Farewell Hajj and they apprised him of ʿAlī's arbitration. In response, the Prophet (s) affirmed, "The judgment is as he ruled."[1] During his time in Yemen, ʿAlī (a) exhibited great success in resolving numerous disputes.[2]

The Farewell Hajj

At the Prophet's command, in the month of Dhū l-Ḥijja of 10/March 632, ʿAlī (a) expedited his journey from Yemen to Mecca to partake in the Prophet's ultimate Hajj pilgrimage, famously known as the Ḥajjat al-Widāʿ or the Farewell Hajj. On the 25th of Dhū l-Qaʿda, ʿAlī (a) joined Prophet Muḥammad (s) and the Muslims in their visit to the Kaaba. As he did not have an animal for sacrifice, the Prophet (s) shared his own sacrifice with him.[3]

As per the account transmitted by Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī, on the day of ʿArafa, while mounted on his camel, the Prophet (s) delivered a sermon to the people. He proclaimed, "O people! I have left among you something that, if you hold onto it, you will never go astray: the Book of God and my household (Ahl al-Bayt)."[4] On the day of Ghadīr al-Khumm, the Prophet (s) reiterated this message once more.[5]

The Event of Ghadīr Khum

As the Muslims were returning from the Farewell Hajj on Dhū l-Ḥijja 18, 10/March 19, 632, Gabriel revealed verse "O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord, and if you do not, you will not have communicated His message, and Allah shall protect you from the people. Indeed Allah does not guide the faithless lot" (Q 5:67) to the Prophet (s) at a location known as al-Juḥfa.[6] There, the event known as Ghadīr al-Khumm took place.

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1. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 3: 1085-86; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 196.
2. For more information about ʿAlī's Arbitrations, see Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, 7: 359; Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 7: 352-53; Mufīd, *Al-Irshād*, 1: 196, 197.
3. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 602.
4. Timidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 6: 131; Ṭabrānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 3: 66.
5. See below.
6. ʿAyyāshī, *al-Tafsīr*, 1: 331-32; Ḥasakanī, *Shawāhid al-tanzīl*, 1: 254-55; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh mdīnat Dimashq*, 42: 237; Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, 2: 298.

Upon receiving the revelation, the Prophet (s) commanded the Hajj pilgrim caravan to halt and instructed those who had gone ahead of the caravan to return to that location. After leading the Muslims in the noon prayer, standing on a raised platform constructed from camel saddles, the Prophet (s) addressed them, saying:

> "Praise be to God, from whom we seek assistance, in whom we have faith, and to whom we entrust all matters. We seek refuge in God from the evil of our own selves and the evil of our actions. Whomever God allows to go astray, there is no guide for them, and whomever God guides cannot be led astray. I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah, and Muhammad is His servant and messenger. O people! God has revealed to me that my departure to Him is imminent. Soon, I will be questioned, and each one of you will also be questioned. What will be your response?"

The participants responded, "We bear witness that you conveyed what you were commanded to, and throughout this journey, you demonstrated benevolence and steadfastness. May God grant you abundant rewards!" The Prophet (s) asked, "Will you not testify that there is no deity but Allah, and Muhammad is His servant and messenger, and that the heavens and the hellfire of God are true, and that the Day of Resurrection is undoubtedly approaching, and that God will resurrect everyone from their graves?" Everyone responded, "Yes! We testify," and then the Prophet (s) said, "O God! Bear witness to their testimony!"

The Prophet (s) asked, "O people, are you listening?" and they replied, "Yes!" Then he said, "I will be awaiting you at the pond of Kawthar, observing your actions. You will come to me and the pond. Its width is as vast as the distance between Sanaa and Busra. It is adorned with silver cups as numerous as the stars in the sky. Consider how you will treat my two weighty things (*Thaqalayn*) after my departure." A person loudly inquired, "What are those two weighty things?" The Prophet (s) answered, "One is the Book of God, with one side in the hand of God and the other side in your hands. Hold fast to it, lest you go astray. The other is my family and household. God the Exalted has disclosed to me that these two shall not part ways until they meet me at the pond of Kawthar. Do not surpass them, for that may lead to destruction, and do not fall behind them, lest you go astray. Therefore, consider how you will treat them after my departure."

He then grasped the hand of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) and raised it. All in attendance witnessed and recognized the Prophet (s) and ʿAlī (a). Then the Prophet (s) asked, "O people! Who is priori to people?" They replied, "God and His Messenger know best." He declared, "God is my Master, and I am the Master of the believers. I have priority over

them. Whoever I am the Master of, ʿAlī is also their Master." He reiterated this statement three times and then proclaimed, "O God! Be the Master of those who accept him as their Master! Be the adversary of those who hold animosity towards him! Aid those who aid him! Do not aid those who do not aid him! Turn the truth wherever he turns!" In conclusion, the Prophet (s) stated, "Those who are present should convey this message to those who are absent."[1]

Hadith al-Ghadīr is one of the well-known hadiths that have been frequently transmitted from the Prophet (s), with numerous individuals narrating it. Among the companions of the Prophet (s) who transmitted this hadith are the following individuals:

Abū Bakr, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭab, Ṭalḥa b. ʿUbayd Allāh, Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām, Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf, ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, Zayd b. al-Arqam, al-Barrāʾ b. ʿĀzib, Burayda b. Ḥuṣayb, Abū Hurayra, Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, Ḥabashī b. Junāda, ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd, ʿImrān b. Ḥuṣayn, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar, ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī, Salmān al-Fārsī, Asʿad b. Zurāra, Khuzayma b. Thābit, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, Sahl b. Ḥunayf, Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān, Samura b. Jundab, Zayd b. Thābit, Anas b. Mālik, and some other companions of the Prophet (s).[2]

No sooner had the gathering dispersed than the following verse was revealed to the Prophet (s): "Today the faithless have despaired of your religion. So do not fear them, but fear Me. Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam as your religion" (Q 5:3).[3] On some accounts, the first individuals who pledged allegiance to ʿAlī (a) included Abū Bakr, ʿUmar b. Khaṭṭāb, al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām, and Ṭalḥa. After that, Muḥājirūn and Anṣār pledged allegiance to Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a).[4]

After the Prophet's sermon in Ghadīr al-Khumm, Ḥassān b. Thābit, a skilled poet, sought permission from the Prophet (s) to compose a poem on the subject. The Prophet (s) granted him permission, and Ḥassān recited a poem with the following content: "The Prophet (s) called upon the people on the day of Ghadīr in the area of Khumm. So listen

1. For information about the text of Ghadīr's sermon, see Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 108-12, Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 112; Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 247; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 12: 234; Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 3: 29; Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, 2: 298; Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 37: 124, 184-85; Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 1: 34-35.

2. See Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 1: 41-144.

3. The accounts of the revelation of this verse on the day of Ghadīr are reported in the following sources: Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 8: 290; Ibn al-Maghāzilī, *Manāqib*, 46; Khaʷārazmī, *al-Manāqib*, 135, 156; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 12: 237; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 5: 210; Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, 2: 259.

4. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 177.

attentively as the Prophet (s) makes his call. He said, 'Whoever I am the master of, this ʿAlī is also his master. People, while holding no animosity, said, 'Your God is our Master, and our authority is under you. None of us will disobey you.' Then he turned to [ʿAlī (a)] and said, 'O ʿAlī! Rise, for I have chosen you as the leader after me. Hold fast to his guardianship and be his true companions.' At that moment, [the Prophet (s)] prayed, 'O God! Be the Master of those who embrace him as their master, and be the adversary of those who take him as their adversary'."[1]

The Event of Surah al-Maʿārij

In some accounts, during the event of al-Ghadīr, an individual approached the Prophet (s) and said, "You commanded us, on behalf of God, to bear witness that there is no deity but Allah and that you are His messenger. You also instructed us to engage in jihad, perform Hajj, establish prayers, give zakat, and observe fasting. We willingly accepted [and complied with all of these]. However, you were not satisfied and appointed this young man over us, stating, 'Whoever I am the master of, this person is also their master.' Did God command you to do so, or did you act upon your own accord?" The Prophet (s) said, "this is a command from God." The individual turned back towards his mount, uttering, "O God! If what Muhammad is saying is true, then rain stones upon us from the sky or send down upon us a painful punishment." No sooner had he mounted his animal than a stone descended from the sky, striking his head and causing his death. In response, God revealed the following verse: "An asker asked for a punishment sure to befall" (Q 70:1).[2]

Implication of Hadith al-Ghadīr for ʿAlī's Guardianship

Some Sunni scholars have objected to the chain of transmission and the implications of Hadith al-Ghadīr. These objections can be summarized as follows: (1) Weakness of the chain of transmission of Hadith al-Ghadīr,[3] (2) the contention that the term *walī* (translated as "master" above) does not necessarily imply imamate or caliphate.[4]

The claim regarding the weakness of its chain of transmission is unfounded and not acceptable. As previously mentioned, numerous companions of the Prophet (s) have

1. Ṭabarī al-Āmulī al-Kabīr, *al-Mustarshid*, 469; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 177; Zarandī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 112. In his book *al-Ghadīr*, ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī references this verse from 12 Sunni sources (Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 2: 66-68).

2. Ḥasakānī, *Shawāhid al-tanzīl*, 2: 381-83; Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 3: 40; Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, 18: 278; Ḥalabī, *al-Sīra al-Ḥalabiyya*, 3: 302.

3. See e.g. Īījī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, 8: 361.

4. See e.g. Shīrāzī, *al-Ishāra*, 398.

narrated the event, and there are also many individuals in subsequent generations who have transmitted it. Additionally, the statement "Whoever I am the master (*mawlā*) of, ʿAlī is also his master" is found in the majority of prominent firsthand Sunni sources.[1] Among these sources are *Sunan Ibn Māja* and *Sunan al-Nisāʾī*, which are recognized as two of the six authentic books of hadith in Sunni tradition.[2] Not only is this hadith cited in Sunni sources, but there are also scholars within the Sunni tradition who consider it to be an accurate and reliable hadith.[3] Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) authored a book in which he compiled the chains of transmission of Hadith al-Ghadīr. This book was seen by al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347).[4] Furthermore, al-Dhahabī himself authored a book titled *Ṭuruq ḥadīth man kunt mawlāh* (Chains of Transmission of the Hadith "Whoever I Was the Master of"), in which he documented the hadith from over 30 companions of the Prophet (s).[5] These instances provide further support for the authenticity of Hadith al-Ghadīr according to prominent Sunni sources.

Perhaps the main objection raised against Hadith al-Ghadīr pertains to its interpretation. Those who raise this objection argue that the term walī/mawlā is not used in this context to refer to a person who has priority in handling affairs or someone who is deserving of the position of caliphate (the Prophet's successor). One way to address this objection is by referring to Arabic dictionaries and examining the meaning of walī/mawlā as used in the Quranic context. This is a method employed by certain Shiite scholars in response to the objection.[6] On the contrary, the meaning of walī/mawlā can be inferred from the context of the preceding portion of the Sermon of al-Ghadīr. Furthermore, historical evidence allows us to gain insight into how people present during the event, at that time, understood the term walī/mawlā. Let us briefly recap the latter two responses.

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1. As mentioned earlier, the Prophet (s) referred to the guardianship of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) on two occasions. The first instance was during ʿAlī's expedition to Yemen, and the second occasion was during the event of Ghadīr al-Khumm. In earlier Sunni sources, the phrase "whoever I was the master of (*man kuntu Mawlāh*)" is mentioned in various hadiths: some in their discussions of the story of the expedition to Yemen (see e.g. Maʿmar b. Rhshid, *Jāmiʿ*, 11: 225; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 374; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 584), and some others when referencing the event of Ghadīr al-Khumm (Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar, *Ḥadīth ʿAlī b. Ḥujr*, 524; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 366, 372; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 586).

2. Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1: 87-88; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 437.

3. Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 613; Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 2: 290; Albānī, *Silsilat al-aḥādīth al-ṣaḥīḥa*, 4: 331, 336.

4. Dhahabī, *Siyar al-aʿlām*, 14: 277; see also Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 11: 147. Interestingly, al-Ṭabrī ignores the Ghadīr incident in his book *Tārīkh*.

5. Maqrīzī, *al-Muqaffā*, 5: 125.

6. See e.g. Jaʿfarī, *Buḥūth ḥawl al-Imāma: fī maʿna l-Imām wa l-Walī*. For more information about this matter, see the chapter "The Meaning of "Walī/Mawlā" in Imami Theology" in this book.

Certain Sunni scholars hold the belief that in this context, the term walī/mawlā signifies a helper (*nāṣir*) rather than indicating priority in managing people's affairs. Consequently, they argue that Hadith al-Ghadīr is not related to imamate and caliphate.[1] To refute this claim, it can be pointed out that the preceding part of the sermon, as cited in Sunni sources of hadith, includes the statement: "Do you not know that I have priority (*awlā*) over you."[2] This statement indicates that in the present context, mawlā refers to having priority over people in handling the affairs of this world and the hereafter, which alludes to the Quranic verses "The Prophet is closer (*awlā*) to the faithful than their own souls" (Q 33:6). This refutes the suggestion that the term walī/mawlā is used to denote "helper" or any other alternative meaning.

Another significant piece of evidence regarding the meaning of the term walī/mawlā is the understanding of the people at the time. For instance, we can glean insight into how the Prophet's companions understood this term in Hadith al-Ghadīr through the congratulations expressed by some companions to Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), as mentioned earlier. This is also documented in Sunni sources. Following the al-Ghadīr sermon, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb approached Imam ʿAlī (a) and congratulated him, saying, "O son of Abī Ṭālib! Congratulations. You have become the master (*mawlā*) of every faithful man and woman."[3] If the term walī/mawlā meant helper as some suggest, then ʿUmar's congratulatory statement to ʿAlī (a) would be nonsensical, as the concept of assistance or support was not something new and had already been referenced in the Quran "But the faithful, men and women, are comrades (*awliyāʾ*) of one another" (Q 9:71).

Indeed, there are specific hadiths that highlight how the Prophet's companions understood the term walī/mawlā in Hadith al-Ghadīr to signify imamate and guardianship over people. For instance, Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ conveyed to Muʿāwiya, "You fought against ʿAlī while being fully aware that he was more deserving of the matter [caliphate] than you." When Muʿāwiya inquired about the reason behind Saʿd's statement, Saʿd responded, "It is because the Prophet (s) had explicitly proclaimed, 'Whoever I am the master of, ʿAlī is also his master (*mawlā*)'."[4] In another instance, ʿAdī b. Ḥātim conveyed to Muʿāwiya, "Did the Prophet (s) not designate him [ʿAlī (a)] as the criterion [*ʿalam*] on the day of Ghadīr al-Khumm? Did he not explicitly state, 'Whoever I

1. Rāzī, *al-Arbaʿīn*, 2: 299-300.
2. See e.g. Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar, *Ḥadīth ʿAlī b. Ḥujr*, 524; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Sunna*, 2: 605, 606; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, 7: 442.
3. See e.g. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 372; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 596, 610; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 3: 633.
4. Balāthurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 80.

am the master of, ʿAlī is also his master (*mawlā*)'?"[1] In addition to these instances, the poem composed by Ḥassān b. Thābit further supports this interpretation.

This body of evidence collectively demonstrates that in Hadith al-Ghadīr, the Prophet (s) intended the term walī/mawlā to specifically signify caliphate and guardianship over people. Likewise, the term walī/mawlā used by the Prophet (s) in the events following Amīr al-Mu'minīn's expedition to Yemen can be interpreted in a similar manner.

The Prophet's Demise

Early in 11/632, the Prophet (s) fell ill and was confined to his bed. On Thursday, during the final days of his life, when his illness had worsened, the Prophet (s) requested, "Bring me a sheet and ink so that I may write something for you, to prevent you from going astray after me." At that moment, a commotion arose near the Prophet's bed. ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb exclaimed, "The Prophet is overwhelmed by pain. We have the Book of God, which is sufficient for us." Subsequently, a dispute arose among those surrounding the Prophet (s). A quarrel erupted between those who supported the Prophet's desire to write and those who opposed it. The Prophet (s) was saddened by the situation and instructed, "Leave me alone."[2] Following the Prophet's passing, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās carried the memory of this event, which became known as the Tragedy of Thursday (*Raziyyat al-Khamīs*). Tears streamed down his beard as he lamented, "What a tragic occurrence. Their disputes and disturbances prevented the Prophet (s) from writing that piece."[3]

According to reports, when the Prophet (s) fell ill, he requested, "Bring me my friend." Upon ʿAlī's arrival, the Prophet (s) engaged in a lengthy private conversation with him. When asked about the content of their discussion, ʿAlī (a) responded, "He informed me about a gate [of knowledge] that opens a thousand gates, and each of those gates, in turn, opens a thousand more gates."[4]

As the Prophet's illness worsened and his companions gathered around him, ʿAmmār b. Yāsir inquired about who should be responsible for performing his funeral wash and

1. Ḍubbī, *Akhbār al-wāfidīn*, 23.

2. This account is cited in Sunni sources with varying wordings. In most sources, ʿUmar's statement is mentioned as "Pain has overwhelmed the Prophet." (Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, 5: 438; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 178; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1: 36-37, 7: 9; Muslīm, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5: 76). However, some sources also include the phrase "he says deliriums." (Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 7: 137).

3. Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, 5: 438; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 188; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 5: 134-35; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1: 34, 9: 111.

4. Ṣaffār, *Baṣā'ir*, 303.

leading his funeral prayer. In response, the Prophet (s) answered, "ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, for he will be aided by angels in washing each of my body parts." He then instructed ʿAlī (a) to take on the responsibility of shrouding and burying him, while also providing recommendations regarding the funeral prayer.[1] Shortly thereafter, as the Prophet's illness further deteriorated, he turned to ʿAlī (a) and earnestly asked, "O brother! Will you accept my will, fulfill my promises and debts, and attend to the affairs of my household?" To which ʿAlī (a) replied, "Yes, O Messenger of God! I will." Then, the Prophet (s) bestowed upon ʿAlī (a) his ring, sword, coat of armor, war suit, and the scarf he used to wear around his waist during battles.[2]

ʿAlī (a) remained by the Prophet's side during the final moments of his life. As the Prophet's passing became imminent, his head found solace within the embrace of ʿAlī (a).[3] Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) himself recounts, "The Messenger died with his head on my chest"[4]

In accordance with the Prophet's will, Imam ʿAlī (a) assumed the duty of washing, shrouding, and burying the Prophet's body.[5] After completing the washing and shrouding of the Prophet's blessed body, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) gently uncovered his face and uttered:

> "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you. You are pure and sweet-scented, both in life and in death. Your departure has severed a connection that remained intact after the passing of other Prophets, namely, the Prophethood and the conveyance [of divine messages]. The magnitude of this tragedy surpasses any other, rendering all other calamities insignificant in comparison. This tragedy has engulfed all people to the extent that they stand united [in their sorrow over your departure]. If it were not for your command to exercise patience [in the face of trials], my eyes would run dry from the depth of my grief for you. However, what will forever reside within our hearts is the heaviness of sorrow and remorse, solely attributed to the loss we feel due to your passing, although they are insignificant [compared to the tragedy of your departure]. May my father and mother be sacrificed for you! Remember us in the presence of your God and show your care and concern for us."

1. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 633-34; see also Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 197.
2. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 185.
3. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 202.
4. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 197; see also Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 201-2; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 186.
5. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 187.

He then gently kissed the Prophet's face and respectfully covered it with the shroud.[1]

And so, the blessed body of the Prophet (s) was laid to rest where he had his departure from this world. It is worth noting that during this time, the people had gathered in Saqīfa, engaging in disputes regarding the Prophet's successor.

ʿAlī's Status during the Prophet's Lifetime

ʿAlī (a) was one of the scribes of revelation, and served as a secretary to the Prophet (s). He transcribed letters and treaties under the Prophet's guidance.[2] Furthermore, during the era of the Prophet (s), Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) played a pivotal role in compiling and preserving the Quran. He gathered the verses of the Quran and recited them to the Prophet (s) for verification.[3] He was blessed with the privilege of constant companionship with and a profound spiritual closeness to the Prophet (s). During the lifetime of Prophet Muḥammad (s), ʿAlī (a) stood as one of his foremost supporters, serving as a valiant warrior and carrying the Prophet's flag in the battlefields. Furthermore, he held a significant role as one of the Prophet's advisors in political matters and frequently embarked on journeys to different regions as his representative.[4]

Undeniably, the bond between the Prophet (s) and ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) was a unique and exceptional relationship. According to an account, the Prophet (s) sent ʿAlī (a) as the leader of an army to a particular region. As ʿAlī (a) was departing, the Prophet (s) raised his hands to the sky and prayed, "O God! Do not let me pass away until You grant me the sight of ʿAlī once again."[5]

In numerous instances, as mentioned previously, the Prophet (s) referred to ʿAlī (a) as his brother. Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) himself also frequently emphasized this special bond between them.[6] In the story of Mubāhala, ʿAlī (a) was described as a near and dear relative ("our souls") of the Prophet (s). According to certain accounts, when some tribes rebelled and caused unrest, the Prophet (s) remarked, "If they persist in their actions, I will send a man to them who is akin to me."[7] On numerous occasions, the Prophet (s) addressed Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī (a), affirming their profound connection by saying, "you

1. Mufīd, *al-Amālī*, 103-4.
2. Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 73, 453; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 80; Jahshiyārī, *al-Wuzarāʾ wa l-kuttāb*, 15.
3. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 257-59; Wakīʿ, *Akhbār al-quḍāt*, 62-69; Marzbānī, *Muʿjam al-shuʿarāʾ*, 168; Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 41; Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī, *Ḥulyat al-awliyāʾ*, 1: 61-62.
4. Vaglieri, "ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib," *EI²*, 1: 381.
5. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 609, 655; Timidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 6: 94.
6. See e.g., Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 17; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1: 87; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 409, 432.
7. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 374; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 571; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 343.

are from me and I am from you,"[1] which is cited in different words as well: "ʿAlī is from me and I am from him."[2]

Regarding his relationship with the Prophet (s), Imam ʿAlī (a) himself states: "I held a unique position in relation to the Prophet (s). Each day, I would visit his house at dawn, and upon his permission, I would enter."[3] When asked about his extensive knowledge of hadiths from the Prophet (s), ʿAlī (a) explained, "Truly, whenever I inquired, he would respond, and even in moments of my silence, he initiated the conversation himself."[4] In another hadith, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) recounted, "I would visit the Prophet (s) every morning and evening. Whenever I asked questions, he would provide answers, and even in my moments of silence, he would initiate conversations. There was no verse revealed to him that I did not read and comprehend its interpretation [directly from the Prophet (s)]. He supplicated to God, seeking assistance for me to retain everything he taught me. As a result, I never forget anything related to matters of halal and haram, [divine] commands and prohibitions, and the obedience and disobedience [to God]. The Prophet (s) placed his hand on my chest and invoked, 'O God! Fill his heart with knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and illumination.' He then turned to me and conveyed, 'My God has informed me that my request concerning you has been fulfilled'."[5]

The Prophet's honoring of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) extended beyond their private discussions. As previously mentioned, the Prophet (s) publicly esteemed him on numerous occasions, in different settings and moments, before others. An illustrative incident highlighting this is the previously mentioned event of Closing the Doors. Furthermore, as previously witnessed in the account of the expedition to Yemen, the Prophet (s) conveyed to ʿAmr b. Shās, "Anyone who hurts ʿAlī has indeed hurt me."[6] In a sermon, the Prophet (s) proclaimed, "O people! I invite you to love the closest of the Quraysh to me, my brother and cousin, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. Truly, only the believers love him, while only the hypocrites hate him. Whoever loves him has, indeed, loved me, and whoever harbors dislike for him has, in turn, disliked me. And whosoever dislikes me shall face the punishment from God, the Glorious and the Honored."[7] These words were

1. See e.g., Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3: 184, 5: 18, 141; Timidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 6: 77; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 433, 459, 483.
2. See e.g., Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1: 86; Timidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 6: 79; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 432-4.
3. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 2: 77; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 2: 43, 7: 450.
4. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 258; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 98; see also Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 366; Timidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 2: 82, 83; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 450.
5. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 386.
6. Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 6: 73.
7. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 622.

frequently reminded by Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) as well.[1] Furthermore, Umm Salama also transmitted the same words from the Prophet (s).[2]

Moreover, the Prophet (s) consistently affirmed the religious authority of ʿAlī (a). As previously mentioned, during the events at al-Ḥudaybiyya, after the signing of the peace treaty, he openly declared, "I am the city of knowledge, and ʿAlī is its gate. Whoever seeks knowledge must pass through this gate."[3] In various forms, a similar hadith can also be found in Sunni sources.[4] In various narrations, the Prophet (s) is documented as saying, "I am the house of wisdom, and ʿAlī (a) is its gate."[5] In other versions, it is mentioned as, "I am the city of wisdom, and ʿAlī is its gate," or "I am the city of jurisprudence, and ʿAlī is its gate."[6] Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 654/1256), a renowned Sunni scholar, considered this hadith to be authentic and reliable.[7]

The Prophet (s) depicted ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) as the steadfast companion of truth. In a hadith attributed to the Prophet (s), he stated, "Whoever desires to live my life, have a death like my death, and enter the eternal paradise promised to me by my God, must adhere to the guardianship of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. For he will never guide you away from the path of guidance or lead you astray."[8] According to another hadith attributed to the Prophet (s), he supplicated, "May God bless ʿAlī. O God! Place the truth wherever he moves."[9] For this reason, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) interpreted verse 7 of Surah al-Raʿd (13): "You are only a warner, and there is a guide for every people," in the following manner: "The Messenger of God delivers admonitions, and I am the guide."[10]

A significant occasion where the Prophet (s) highlighted the elevated status of Imam ʿAlī (a) is captured in the Hadith al-Ṭayr, also known as the Hadith of the Bird. The story unfolds as follows: A Muslim offered a grilled chicken as a gift to the Prophet (s). Upon receiving it, the Prophet (s) invoked, "O God! Send Your dearest creation to partake in

1. See e.g. Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 6: 93; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 445.
2. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 648.
3. Ibn al-Muqriʾ, *al-Muʿjam*, 84-85.
4. See e.g., Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 11: 65; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 137-38; Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawāʾid*, 9: 114. For information about chain of transmition of this Hadith, see Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 378-83.
5. Aḥmad b. Aḥmad, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 634; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 6: 82; Ājurī, *al-Sharīʿa*, 4: 2069.
6. Ājurī, *al-Sharīʿa*, 4: 2068, 2069-70.
7. Ṣibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat al-khawāṣ*, 51-52.
8. Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 139; see also Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 5: 194; Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawāʾid*, 9: 108.
9. Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 6: 75; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 134.
10. Ḥakim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 140. Interestingly, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) includes the same hadith in his book with the identical chain of transmission, but he states that the term "guide" refers to an individual from the Banū Hāshim clan.

this bird." Soon after, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) arrived.[1] Several Sunni scholars, including al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Mardawayh (d. 410/1020), and al-Dhahabī, have authored books dedicated to extracting the chains of transmission of this hadith.[2] Furthermore, Sayyid ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī (d. 1996) authored a book titled *Qabasāt min faḍā'il Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (*a*) where he compiled numerous transmissions of the Hadith of the Bird from prominent Sunni hadith sources.[3]

The primary evidence highlighting the esteemed status of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a), as recognized by the Prophet (s), is his appointment as his successor, as exemplified in the event of Ghadīr al-Khumm. This event was not the sole instance in which the Prophet (s) designated ʿAlī (a) as his successor and urged others to obey him. As previously mentioned, the Prophet (s) persistently invited the Quraysh to embrace Islam and sought their support in a gathering. However, upon encountering their refusal and witnessing that only ʿAlī (a) expressed willingness to aid him, the Prophet (s) firmly held his hand and uttered, "Verily, this individual is my vicegerent and successor among you. Therefore, obey him and heed his words." In a mocking manner, the participants turned to Abū Ṭālib and laughed, saying, "He [the Prophet (s)] is instructing you to listen to your son and obey him."[4] As previously mentioned, during the events following ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib's expeditions to Yemen, the Prophet (s) declared, "He is your guardian after me."[5] In one account, during the Battle of Tabuk and Imam ʿAlī's assumption of leadership in the city, the Prophet (s) said to him, "You are my successor for all believers after me."[6]

In the verses of the Quran that narrate the stories of the Prophets, the households and families of the Prophets are often accorded a special status. They are sometimes the sole survivors of divine punishments, while in other cases, they are the primary supporters and helpers of the Prophets. Furthermore, there are instances where they were chosen as successors to the Prophets among the people.[7] Overall, it can be inferred that the society during the Prophetic era had an understanding of the concept of succession, with the belief that one of the Prophet's relatives was deserving of the caliphate. Furthermore, according to reports found in sources of hadith and historical accounts, it can be inferred that the issue of the Prophet's successor was a matter of concern and focus among the

1. See e.g. Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 6: 81; Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan*, 7: 410.
2. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 7: 353.
3. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Qabasāt*, 67-89.
4. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 321.
5. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 38: 117; Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 441.
6. Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Sunna*, 2: 565, 603; Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 417.
7. Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad*, 8-13.

people during that time. As mentioned earlier, in the account of the Prophet's endeavor to garner support from the Banū ʿĀmir tribe, a member of the tribe raised the question of the Prophet's successor. He requested the Prophet (s) to appoint him as the successor, but the Prophet (s) responded, saying "The position will be up to God, and He will place it where He wants to."[1] ʿUbāda b. al-Ṣāmit, who participated in the event of the Second Pledge of ʿAqaba, describes the pledge made by the people of Medina to the Prophet (s) as follows: "We pledged our allegiance to the Prophet (s) by heeding his words, obeying [him] ... and refraining from engaging in disputes with him regarding matters [of government and caliphate]."[2] In another account, from the period after the Prophet's migration to Medina, Salmān al-Fārsī inquired about his successor (*waṣī*) by asking the Prophet (s), "O Messenger of God! Who will succeed you?" The Prophet (s) responded by asking, "O Salmān, who was Moses's successor?" To which he replied, "Joshua the son of Nun." The Prophet (s) then said, "Verily, my inheritor who will fulfill my obligations and promises is ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib."[3]

As previously noted, these accounts indicate that the question of the Prophet's successor was raised by both the people and the Prophet (s) himself even before the migration to Medina and the establishment of the Islamic state there. Certain individuals expressed their desire to be designated as the successor, but in response, the Prophet (s) emphasized that the successor is determined by the will of God. Furthermore, after the Prophet's arrival in Medina, the issue of succession was raised, and this time the Prophet (s) explicitly mentioned Imam ʿAlī (a). The significance of Salmān al-Fārsī's account lies in the parallel with Joshua, the son of Nun, who assumed leadership among the Children of Israel after the death of Prophet (s) Moses, as attested in historical sources.[4] This account highlights the importance and intricacy of Salmān's account. Another noteworthy aspect of this account is the connection between successorship and inheritance. There are numerous hadiths from the Prophet (s) that emphasize the status of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) as both the designated successor and inheritor.[5]

The aforementioned examples constitute only a fraction of the Prophetic hadiths regarding ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), which can be employed to ascertain his esteemed position during the Prophetic era. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) is recorded as stating, "Regarding

1. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 424-25.
2. Malik b. Anas, *al-Muwaṭṭa'*, 2: 445; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 454.
3. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba,* 2: 615; see also Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, 6: 221; Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawā'id*, 9: 113.
4. See e.g., Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 12.
5. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 7: 265; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba,* 2: 615; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 136.

none of the Prophet's companions have virtues been narrated to the extent they have been narrated about ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib."[1] In other sources, there are authenticated hadiths with reliable chains of transmission (*ṣaḥīḥ*) that affirm the superiority of ʿAlī (a) over other companions of the Prophet (s).[2] Furthermore, according to a hadith narrated from Ibn ʿAbbās, "300 verses of the Quran were revealed regarding ʿAlī."[3]

1. Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 116.
2. Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istiʿāb*, 3: 1115.
3. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 364.

From the Demise of the Prophet (s) to the Government

There is limited information available in historical sources regarding the specific role of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), including during the caliphate of Abū Bakr. The historical accounts of this era primarily focus on the events surrounding Saqīfa and the invasion of Fāṭima's house.

ʿAlī (a) during the Era of Abū Bakr

Immediately following the demise of Prophet Muḥammad (s) in Medina, his relatives, including ʿAlī (a) and ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, were occupied with the task of shrouding and burying the Prophet (s), while a gathering of Anṣār assembled in Saqīfa Banū Sāʿida[1] to discuss the matter of succession after the Prophet (s).[2] In the meanwhile, Abū Bakr, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, and Abū ʿUbayda al-Jarrāḥ joined their gathering. However, a dispute erupted between Anṣār and Muhārijrūn regarding the succession of the Prophet (s). Initially, the Anṣār suggested the election of a leader from their ranks and a leader from the Muhājirūn. However, through the efforts of Abū ʿUbayda al-Jarrāḥ and ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, divisions arose within the Anṣār. Eventually, on the very same day of the Prophet's passing, those present at the Saqīfa pledged their allegiance to Abū Bakr.[3]

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1. Al-Saqīfa literally translates to a canopy where individuals gather. Saqīfa Banū Sāʿida was a specific canopy situated in the lands of the Banū Sāʿida tribe, on the western side of the Prophetic Mosque. Saʿd b. ʿUbāda was a prominent member of this tribe (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 3: 228-29).
2. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 656; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 582.
3. For more information, see Wāqidī, *al-Ridda*, 32-42.

Protests against Abū Bakr's Caliphate

One remarkable aspect of the Saqīfa event is the absence of ʿAlī (a) and the Banū Hāshim. According to Al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 292/905), there were no doubts among the Muhājirūn and Anṣār regarding the caliphate of ʿAlī (a).[1] Amidst the Saqīfa events, certain individuals from the Anṣār were heard proclaiming boldly, "We pledge allegiance solely to ʿAlī."[2] According to accounts of the conversations held at the Saqīfa, Zayd b. al-Arqam al-Anṣārī initially highlighted the virtues of the Anṣār. In response to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf, a supporter of Abū Bakr, he stated, "O son of ʿAwf, had it not been for ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and Banū Hāshim being occupied with the burial of the Messenger of God and [thus] remaining in their homes, no one would have dared to express any desire for this matter [namely, caliphate]."[3] In Fāṭima's house, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), accompanied by the members of the Banū Hāshim, as well as Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām, chose not to pledge allegiance and instead voiced their objections to the abrupt and rushed selection of Abū Bakr.[4]

In addition to these individuals, there were others who refused to pledge allegiance to Abū Bakr. Among those who protested against his succession were figures like Khālid b. Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ, Abū Sufyān, Salmān al-Fārsī, Saʿd b. ʿUbāda, ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (the Prophet's uncle), and Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī. Khālid b. Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ withheld his allegiance from Abū Bakr for a period of six months.[5] Upon learning about Abū Bakr's selection as the caliph, Abū Sufyān, who was away from Medina at the time of the Prophet's passing, voiced his explicit objections. His protest, however, stemmed from the perceived lower social status of the Banū Taym tribe, to which Abū Bakr belonged. Abū Sufyān approached ʿAlī (a) and expressed his willingness to pledge allegiance to him, but ʿAlī (a) declined to accept his allegiance.[6] Saʿd b. ʿUbāda was among those who declined to pledge allegiance, not only to Abū Bakr but also later to ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. During the caliphate of ʿUmar, he chose to leave Medina and migrated to the Levant.[7] Salmān al-Fārsī was one of the protesters who stood against pledging allegiance to Abū Bakr. He explicitly expressed his dissatisfaction, stating, "What have you done and what have you omitted! I swear by God, if they had pledged allegiance to ʿAlī, they would have enjoyed

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 124.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 202.
3. Wāqidī, *al-Ridda*, 45-6.
4. Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, 5: 439; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 565; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 1: 451.
5. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 588.
6. See Ibid., 1: 588-89.
7. Ibid., 1: 589.

[divine blessings] from above and beneath."[1] After the demise of the Prophet (s), ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet's uncle, approached ʿAlī (a) and requested him to come out of his home so that he could openly pledge allegiance to him. However, ʿAlī (a) refused to do so before fulfilling the duty of burying the Prophet (s).[2] Upon learning about people pledging allegiance to Abū Bakr, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) was astounded. ʿAbbās approached him and remarked, "A person of Abū Bakr's caliber would not let go of such an opportunity [to acquire caliphate], which is why I had put forth the suggestion [of pledging allegiance to you]."[3] Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī was another individual who objected to Abū Bakr's caliphate. Although he was not present in Medina during the selection of Abū Bakr, he voiced his opposition upon his return to the city.[4]

Al-Barqī (d.?) documented the names of those who declined to pledge allegiance to Abū Bakr and presented arguments against his claim to the caliphate. In addition to the previously mentioned individuals, al-Barqī includes the following names as well: al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad, Burayda b. Ḥuṣayb, ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, Khuzayma b. Thābit, Sahl b. Ḥunayf, Abū l-Haytham b. al-Tayyihān, Qays b. Saʿd, Ubayy b. Kaʿb, and Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī. Furthermore, they reiterated the allegiance to ʿAlī (a) in opposition to Abū Bakr's claim, recalling the Prophet's statements about ʿAlī's succession on multiple occasions.[5]

ʿAlī's Objection to Abū Bakr's Caliphate

The primary opponent of Abū Bakr's caliphate was ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), who received support from the Anṣār and prominent figures such as Salmān al-Fārsī and al-Zubayr.[6] ʿAlī (a) chose to remain silent regarding the usurpation of his right, as he had already been informed by the Prophet (s) about the people's betrayal.[7] Shortly after completing

1. Ibid., 1: 591; see also Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 7: 443.

2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 583.

3. Ibid., 1: 582.

4. Jawharī, *al-Saqīfa wa al-Fadak*, 62.

5. Barqī, *K. al-Rijāl*, 63-66. In his book *al-Khiṣāl*, al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991) provides a list of 12 individuals from the Muhājirūn and Anṣār who expressed their objections to Abū Bakr's caliphate. However, it should be noted that in his list, he mentions ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd instead of Qays b. Saʿd (Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 2: 461-65).

6. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 2: 49, 6: 43.

7. There are hadiths in Sunni sources that mention the Prophet (s) saying to ʿAlī (a), "The people harbor resentment towards you, but they will not openly express it until after my passing." (Bazzār, *alBaḥr al-zakhkhār*, 2: 293; Abū Yaʿlā, *Musnad*, 1: 284; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 11: 73; Khṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 12: 394; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 322-23; 324). In another hadith, the Prophet (s) addressed ʿAlī (a), saying, "You will face difficulties after me." (Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 372; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 151; Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā*, 10: 150). Thus, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) stated, "One of the things that the Prophet (s) foretold about me was the betrayal of people towards me after him." (Tamīmī, *Bughyat al-bāḥith*, 2: 905; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 153; see also

the burial of the Prophet (s), ʿAlī (a) received news about people pledging allegiance to Abū Bakr. People informed him, saying, "The general population has pledged allegiance to Abū Bakr, and the Anṣār were disregarded due to their internal conflicts. The emancipated slaves (*al-ṭulaqāʾ*) rushed to choose the caliphate, fearing that you might assume the position." Upon hearing this, Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī (a) recited the following verses from the Quran: "Do the people suppose that they will be let off because they say, 'We have faith,' and they will not be tested? Certainly We tested those who were before them. So Allah shall surely ascertain those who are truthful, and He shall surely ascertain the liars. Do those who commit misdeeds suppose that they can outmaneuver Us? Evil is the judgement that they make" (Q 29:2-4).[1]

Abū Bakr sent ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to approach ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), instructing him to bring ʿAlī (a) forcefully.[2] As ʿAlī (a) was brought before Abū Bakr for not pledging allegiance, he was commanded to swear loyalty to Abū Bakr. In response, he declared, "I am more deserving of this [caliphate] than you. I cannot pledge allegiance to you, but you should pledge allegiance to me. You seized the caliphate from the Anṣar based on your close kinship with the Prophet (s). Will you then snatch the caliphate from us, the Prophet's Household? Did you not tell the Anṣar that you were closest to Muḥammad, and they conceded the caliphate to you? I argue with you just as you argued with the Anṣar. We, the Prophet's family, are more deserving of it during the Prophet's life and after his demise. If you truly have faith, be just to us; otherwise, you have committed injustice, and you are well aware of it." ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb insisted, saying, "We will not leave you be until you pledge allegiance." In response, ʿAlī (a) suggested, "Draw this milk, as part of it will be yours. Work hard for Abū Bakr, and he will repay you for it tomorrow." Abū ʿUbayda al-Jarrāḥ addressed ʿAlī (a), saying, "O cousin, you are young while they are elders of the community. You lack their experience and understanding of governance. Abū Bakr is stronger than you in terms of caliphate and he takes into account all aspects of the situation. Therefore, leave the caliphate to him, for if you live, you are destined for the caliphate and possess the qualifications to assume that position. With your exceptional qualities such as knowledge, insight, your background in Islam, and being the Prophet's son-in-law, you surpass them all." ʿAlī (a) spoke out, saying, "O Muhājirūn! Let God be your guide. Do not take away the caliphate and leadership of Muḥammad

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Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 3: 91; Dūlābī, *al-Kunā wa l-asmāʾ*, 1: 318; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 150; Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawāʾid*, 9: 189).

1. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 189-90.

2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 587.

from his household to your own dwellings, and do not deprive his family of their rightful positions. O Muhājirūn! I swear by God, we are the most deserving of the caliphate. We are the Prophet's Household, and those who possess deep understanding and insight in reciting the Book of God belong to our family. We are well-versed in the traditions of the Prophet (s), knowledgeable about the affairs of the people, advocates of forbidding evil, and fair distributors of the public treasury among the people. Therefore, do not let personal desires lead you astray, as it will only distance you further from the truth." Upon hearing ʿAlī's words, Bashīr b. Saʿd al-Anṣārī remarked, "O ʿAlī, if the Anṣār had heard these words before pledging their allegiance to Abū Bakr, no one would have hesitated about your rightful claim to the caliphate."[1] During that meeting, Abū Bakr was unable to convince Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) to pledge allegiance to him and eventually abandoned his efforts.[2]

During the nights, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), accompanied by Fāṭima (a), the Prophet's daughter, reached out to the Anṣār seeking their assistance. In response, they expressed, "O daughter of the Prophet! We have already pledged allegiance to this man. If your husband had approached us before Abū Bakr, we would not have pledged allegiance to Abū Bakr." In reply, ʿAlī (a) stated, "Did you expect me to abandon the Prophet (s), who had just passed away, and engage in conflict over the acquisition of the caliphate?" Fāṭima (a) addressed the Anṣār, saying, "Abū l-Ḥasan [ʿAlī (a)] did what was worthy of doing, and they did what God will hold them accountable for."[3]

According to various sources, there are accounts suggesting that Abū Bakr attempted to win Imam ʿAlī's approval and establish a close relationship with him, but he consistently faced ʿAlī's indifference. On one occasion, Abū Bakr approached ʿAlī (a) and requested a private conversation. During their discussion, Abū Bakr claimed that he had never actively sought the caliphate or made arrangements for it. However, upon hearing the Prophet's statement, "my community never have consensus on misguidance," and witnessing the favorable opinion people held of him, Abū Bakr reluctantly accepted the position of caliphate. Additionally, he expressed that had he known about the opposition he would face from others, he would have never accepted the position in the first place. Imam ʿAlī (a) firmly asserted that he and the other dissenters were also part of the Prophet's community, a point that Abū Bakr acknowledged. ʿAlī (a) reminded Abū Bakr of the elevated status of the opponents of his caliphate, as they were esteemed

1. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 28-29; see also Wāqidī, *al-Ridda*, 45-46.
2. Wāqidī, *al-Ridda*, 47.
3. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 29-30.

companions of the Prophet (s), thereby challenging Abū Bakr's claim based on the Prophet's hadith. Furthermore, ʿAlī (a) highlighted his own virtues and close companionship with the Prophet (s), as well as the significant event of Ghadīr al-Khumm, emphasizing his superiority over Abū Bakr in terms of caliphate and leadership. Moved by the compelling arguments presented by Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), Abū Bakr agreed to publicly delegate the position of caliphate to Imam ʿAlī (a) in the mosque of Medina. However, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb later changed his stance on this matter.[1]

In a later sermon discussing his state of affairs following the selection of Abū Bakr as the caliph, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) expressed the following sentiments: "I looked around me, and when I saw that my family was my only support, I chose to save them from certain death. But I blinked down dust, choked when I drank, suffered harsh throttling, and endured a state more bitter than colocynth."[2] Moreover, it is reported that when people pledged allegiance to Abū Bakr, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) delivered a powerful speech in the mosque of Medina. He solemnly declared, "I swear by the One who nurtured the seeds and created the animals, you are well aware that I am the rightful person deserving of the caliphate and the one whom you were commanded to obey. [You know that] I possess the most knowledge among all of you, and it is through this knowledge that you will find salvation. [You were aware that] I am the chosen successor of your Prophet (s), appointed by your Lord, and fully aware of your best interests. On the Day of Judgment, God, the Exalted and Glorified, will hold you accountable for your choices in leaders. It is with them that you will be resurrected, and it is with them that you will face your Lord." After leaving the mosque, as ʿAlī (a) walked past a herd of sheep, he remarked, "I swear by God that if I had followers as numerous as these sheep, who stood by me on the path of God and His Messenger, I would have removed Abū Bakr from the position of caliphate." The following day, a total of 63 individuals expressed their readiness to pledge allegiance to Imam ʿAlī (a). However, the Imam (a) challenged their sincerity and instructed them to return the next day with shaved heads as a sign of their genuine commitment. On the subsequent day, only four individuals appeared, namely Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī, Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān, ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, and Salmān al-Fārsī.[3]

1. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 2: 548-53.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 26.
3. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 32-33; see also Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 126.

Coercing and Enticing the People to Pledge Allegiance to Abū Bakr

The establishment of Abū Bakr's caliphate was not solely achieved through peaceful dialogues. Historical sources indicate that in addition to the initial pledge of allegiance and subsequent protests, a combination of coercive and persuasive tactics played a significant role in solidifying his position as the caliph. In relation to this matter, al-Barrāʾ b. ʿĀzib, a companion of the Prophet (s), recounted, "Upon hearing the news of people pledging allegiance to Abū Bakr, I witnessed a scene where Abū Bakr, accompanied by ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, Abū ʿUbayda al-Jarrāḥ, and several others, compelled anyone they encountered to pledge allegiance to him either voluntarily or by force."[1]

Furthermore, in this course of events, we can highlight the role of the Aslam tribe in the compelled oath of loyalty to Abū Bakr. According to al-Ṭabarī's account, soon after pledging their allegiance to Abū Bakr, the Aslam tribe arrived in Medina. Their sheer numbers were so substantial that they filled the alleys of the city. In response, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb remarked, "Upon witnessing the arrival of the Aslam tribe, I became convinced of our imminent triumph."[2] Moreover, among the Bedouins who arrived in Medina for the purpose of buying and selling groceries, there were some individuals, possibly including members of the Aslam tribe, who were enticed by the promise of obtaining free provisions from ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. These individuals actively participated in pressuring and attacking those who refused to pledge their allegiance to Abū Bakr, thereby coercing them into submission.[3] This could potentially explain why ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb felt a sense of impending victory upon witnessing the arrival of the Aslam tribe. It is important to recognize that this particular tribe resided in close proximity to Medina[4] and had a historical animosity towards the Anṣār.[5] The importance of the role played by the Aslam tribe in coercing individuals to pledge allegiance to Abū Bakr becomes apparent when considering that the Anṣār later expressed regret over their initial oath of loyalty, as will be elucidated in what follows.[6]

The consequences of rejecting the pledge of allegiance to Abū Bakr extended beyond his caliphate. Saʿd b. ʿUbāda was one of those who declined to pledge allegiance to Abū Bakr, and during the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, he continued to refuse allegiance and eventually migrated to the Levant, where he met his demise. It is worth mentioning

1. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 219.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 222.
3. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 119.
4. Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam qabāʾil al-ʿArab*, 1: 26.
5. See Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 3: 939-40.
6. Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad*, 34.

that certain sources present a peculiar mythical narrative suggesting that he was killed by jinn.[1] On the contrary, according to certain accounts, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb sent a representative to the Levant with the task of persuading Saʿd to pledge allegiance. The directive given was to eliminate Saʿd if he resisted the call to pledge allegiance.[2]

Among those who faced a similar fate as Saʿd b. ʿUbāda for refusing to pledge allegiance to Abū Bakr were Khālid b. Saʿīd al-Umawī and his brothers Abān and ʿAmr. During the time of the Prophet (s), they were appointed as his representatives in Yemen, Bahrain, and the regions surrounding Khaybar, respectively. Upon learning of the Prophet's passing, they returned to Medina. Based on historical accounts, Abū Bakr intended to assign them the same responsibilities in their respective areas. However, Khālid and his brothers chose to exclusively serve the Prophet (s) and declined to work for anyone else. As per sources, they eventually relocated to the Levant, where they met their demise.[3] While historical sources primarily mention Khālid and Abān's refusal to pledge allegiance to Abū Bakr,[4] the circumstances surrounding their deaths raise suspicions. All three brothers met their end in an incident that occurred in the Murj a-Ṣuffar area in Damascus during the early years of ʿUmar's caliphate.[5]

Coercion was not the sole strategy employed by Abū Bakr and his associates; they also resorted to enticing others in order to compel them into pledging allegiance. When a group of the Prophet's companions sided with ʿAlī (a) and refused to pledge allegiance, Abū Bakr sought counsel from ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, Abū ʿUbayda al-Jarrāḥ, and al-Mughīra b. Shuʿba to find a resolution. They reached a consensus to approach ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib and propose a role in governance for him and his sons, with the intention of persuading him to withdraw his support for ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), consequently undermining ʿAlī's position. Despite their efforts, ʿAbbās remained steadfast in his support for ʿAlī (a).[6]

1. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 463; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, 259.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 589; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, 5: 14.
3. Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 192; Ibn ʿAdb al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 2: 422; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 29: 56, 46: 25.
4. Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 1: 575.
5. Khalīfa b. Kayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 63; see also Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istiʿāb*, 1: 64, 2: 422, 3: 1178; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 1: 47, 1: 757, 3: 728.
6. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 124-26.

The Impact of Tribal Rivalries on Abū Bakr's Caliphate

An important aspect to consider when analyzing the Saqīfa incidents is the presence of tribal rivalries among the parties involved. These rivalries can be examined from two perspectives: firstly, rivalries among the tribes in Medina, specifically the Anṣār, and secondly, rivalries among the nomadic factions within the Quraysh tribe. During the Saqīfa event, the Anṣār, led by Saʿd b. ʿUbāda from the al-Khazraj tribe, gathered at the Saqīfa to discuss the succession of the Prophet (s). In contrast, the Banū ʿAbd al-Ashhal, hailing from the al-Aws tribe, aligned themselves with Abū Bakr.[1] Madelung highlights the existing rivalry between the al-Aws and al-Khazraj tribes, noting that the al-Aws tribe was inherently resistant to accepting leadership from a member of the al-Khazraj tribe, such as Saʿd b. ʿUbāda. This rivalry between the two tribes may explain their alignment with Abū Bakr during the Saqīfa incident.[2] This fact becomes evident when we examine the lineage of the individuals who relayed information to Abū Bakr and ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb regarding the assembly of the Anṣār. These individuals were Maʿn b. ʿAdī and ʿUwaym b. Sāʿida,[3] whose ancestry is traced back to the ʿAmr b. ʿŪf clan of the al-Aws tribe.[4] This sheds light on how internal divisions within the Anṣār contributed to the emergence of Abū Bakr's caliphate during the Saqīfa incident.

Furthermore, it is important to note the existence of tribal conflicts within various clans of the Quraysh. One notable example is the longstanding animosity between Banū Umayya and Banū Hāshim. Al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1441) authored a book titled *al-Nizāʿwa l-takhāṣum fī-mā bayna Banī Umayya wa Banī Hāshim* (Conflicts and animosity between Banū Umayya and Banū Hāshim), extensively exploring the reasons behind the disputes between these two Qurayshi clans. It is worth noting that neither of these influential clans were present at the Saqīfa gathering, with only the members of minor clans of the Quraysh being present there.[5] This highlights the involvement of a third faction comprising various clans of the Quraysh, such as the Banū Taym to which Abū Bakr belonged, the Banū ʿAdī to which ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb belonged, and the Banū Fihr to which Abū ʿUbayda al-Jarrāḥ belonged. This group saw an opportunity to seize power during the Saqīfa incident. It also explains why Abū Sufyān, who was not present in Medina at the time, raised objections based on tribal issues and the perceived inferiority

1. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 656.
2. Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad*, 33-34.
3. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 660; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 581.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 241.
5. See Wāqidī, *al-Ridda*, 32-47.

of the Banū Taym clan occupying such a position.[1] The objection questioning the suitability of the Banū Taym clan, as well as Abū Bakr himself, for the position of caliphate was raised during the series of conflicts known as the *al-Ridda* (apostasy) wars.[2] The prominence of tribal considerations during this event was such that Abū Bakr explicitly argued for the limitation of the caliphate to the Quraysh tribe, emphasizing that the other Arab tribes only recognized the authority of the Quraysh.[3]

Tribal motivations can be observed in the efforts to deny Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) the position of caliphate. Years after the Saqīfa incident, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb explained to ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās the rationale behind the Quraysh's refusal to accept ʿAlī (a) as the caliph. He stated, "They did not want Prophethood and caliphate to be consolidated within your clan [Banū Hāshim], as they feared that you would belittle and arrogantly assert superiority over them. Consequently, the Quraysh opted for the caliphate for themselves and achieved success in doing so."[4] One notable motivation behind the opposition was the envy of other Quraysh clans towards the Banū Hāshim. During the caliphate of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, Ibn ʿAbbās, in a conversation with him, stated, "Regarding the denial of the position [caliphate] to us by our own relatives [other Quraysh clans], you were fully aware that it stemmed from their envy."[5] Additionally, during the Ridda Wars, al-Ḥārith b. Muʿāwiya, a member of Kinda tribe, expressed to Abū Bakr's representative for zakat collection, "I swear by God that your denial of it [the caliphate] to them [the Prophet's Household] is purely fueled by envy."[6]

Lady Faṭima's Claim to Fadak and Her Inheritance Share

As the rightful claim to the caliphate was denied to Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), Lady Faṭima (a) asserted her right to inheritances, which encompassed Fadak and one-fifth (*khums*) of the spoils from Khaybar.[7] According to certain sources, there are specific properties and possessions attributed to the Prophet (s). These include seven gardens (*al-*

1. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 588-89. In his opposition to Abū Bakr's appointment as caliph, Abū Sufyān remarked that Abū Bakr hailed from the least esteemed tribe within the Quraysh. In an attempt to demean Abū Bakr, he referred to him as *Abū l-Fuṣayl*, as *bakr* literally denotes a large camel, while *fuṣayl* signifies a young or infant camel.

2. See pages 82-85 in this book.

3. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 659.

4. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 223.

5. Zubayr b. Bakkār, *al-Akhbār al-muwaffaqiyyāt*, 234.

6. Wāqidī, *al-Ridda*, 177. For more information about the centrality of tribalism in the Saqīfa incident, see Muballighī, "Padīdār-shināsī-yi Saqīfa bi-mathāba-yi amr-i siyāsī."

7. Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 1: 196.

ḥā'iṭ=ḥawā'iṭ), which were gifted to the Prophet (s), his portion of the Banū al-Naḍīr's lands following their exile, half of the Fadak lands for which the Prophet (s) reached a compromise with their owners, one-third of Wādī al-Qurā in which a compromise was made with the Jewish inhabitants, two forts in Khaybar named al-Waṭīḥ and al-Salālim, which the Prophet (s) possessed through a compromise, and his share of the *khums* of spoils obtained in Khaybar without engaging in battle. These properties were exclusively owned by the Prophet (s), with no one else having a claim to them.[1] Among these mentioned sources, one specific property that the Prophet (s) gifted to Fāṭima was the lands of Fadak. It is reported that following the revelation of Quranic verse "Give the relatives their [due] right" (Q 17:26), the Prophet (s) bestowed Fadak upon Fāṭima (a).[2] According to various sources, Fāṭima's objections her claim to Fadak, the charities of Medina, and the *khums* share of the spoils from Khaybar.[3]

After the passing of the Prophet (s), Abū Bakr took possession of all his belongings, including the Prophet's share of *khums*. Fāṭima (a) asserted her claim to inherit the Prophet's property. In response, Abū Bakr cited the Prophet's statement, saying, "We the Prophets do not leave behind inheritance; what we leave is for charity."[4] In her argument against Abū Bakr, Fāṭima (a) posed the question, "Who would inherit you if you were to pass away?" Abū Bakr answered, "My wife and children." Fāṭima (a) then questioned, "If that's the case, how is it that you inherit from the Prophet (s), but we do not?" Subsequently, ʿAlī (a) invoked the Quranic verse "Solomon inherited from David" (Q 27:16) which pertains to Prophet (s) Solomon inheriting from Prophet (s) David, as well as the verses "So grant me from Yourself an heir, who may inherit from me and inherit from the House of Jacob, and make him, my Lord, pleasing [to You]" (Q 19:5-6) that mention Job's household inheriting him. Moreover, drawing upon the example of John, the son of Zechariah, ʿAlī (a) argued for Fāṭima's rightful ownership of Fadak.[5] When the Prophet's daughter (a) insisted on her rights, Abū Bakr requested witnesses to support her claim. ʿAlī (a) and Umm Ayman provided their testimonies, but Abū Bakr dismissed their testimony, citing that in this case, the testimony of a man and a woman together is

1. Nawawī, *al-Minhāj*, 12: 82; see also Qāsīm b. Sallām, *al-Amwāl*, 14-25; Māwirdī, *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya*, 254-56.

2. Ḥākim, *Faḍā'il Fāṭima*, 51, 53; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿaḍīm*, 5: 63; Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, 4: 177; see also Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 16: 275; Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawā'id*, 7: 49.

3. See e.g. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5: 20; Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 1: 196.

4. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 127. It should be noted that this hadith is debatable in terms of evidence and in terms of meaning (for more information, see Rūḥī-barandaq, "Naqd-i takhṣīṣ-i Āyāt-i Irth bi ḥadith-i 'Innā maʿshir al-anbiyā' lā nuwarrith' bā ta'kīd bar istidlāl-hāyi Fāṭima-yi Zahrā (a) dar Khuṭba-yi Fadakiyya.").

5. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 240-41.

deemed inadmissible.[1] Following these events, Fāṭima (a) distanced herself from Abū Bakr.[2]

The Fadakiyya Sermon

In response to the infringement of her rights and the denial of the caliphate to Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a), Fāṭima delivered a sermon in the Prophetic Mosque, where it resonated amongst the gathered Anṣār and Muhājirūn. This sermon became renowned as the Fadakiyya Sermon or *al-Khuṭbat al-Fadakiyya*.[3] Lady Fāṭima (a) commenced her sermon by offering praise to God and acknowledging the noble mission of the Prophet (s). She then made references to the close relationship between Imam ʿAlī (a) and the Prophet (s), highlighting his elevated position among the chosen friends of God and his unwavering courage in defending the Prophet (s) and the cause of Islam. She sternly rebuked the companions of the Prophet (s) for straying from the path of righteousness and succumbing to hypocrisy after his demise. Furthermore, she strongly criticized Abū Bakr for his refusal to grant her rightful inheritance, questioning him, "Does the Quran state that you inherit from your father while I do not?" She also invoked the same Quranic verses that ʿAlī (a) had previously used in a private conversation with Abū Bakr. In her address, Fāṭima (a) confronted Abū Bakr, deferring his judgment to the court of God on the Day of Resurrection. She questioned the silence of the Prophet's companions in the face of such injustice and explicitly stated that the actions of Abū Bakr and his associates violated the covenant they had made with the Prophet (s). In the final part of her sermon, the Prophet's daughter (a) asserted that their deeds would forever carry the stain of eternal damnation, leading them to the fires of hell.[4]

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1. Balāthurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 40.

2. Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, 5: 472; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 8: 149.

3. The Fadakiyya Sermon is found in several early sources, with some of the earliest ones being *Balāghāt al-nisāʾ* (Rhetorics of women) by Ibn Ṭayfūr al-Baghdādī (d. 280/893) and *al-Saqīfa wa al-Fadak* by al-Jawharī al-Baṣrī (d. 323/934-35). In *Balāghāt al-nisāʾ*, there are two narrations of the sermon. The first narration is attributed to Zayd b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Zayd (d.?), who was the great-grandson of Zayd b. ʿAlī, the martyr (d. 122/740). However, it should be noted that the name of Zayd b. ʿAlī is distorted in *Balāghāt al-nisāʾ*. The second narration is through Zaynab bt. al-Ḥusayn. In *al-Saqīfa wa al-Fadak*, the sermon is exclusively narrated through Zaynab, the daughter of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), and ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan al-Muthannā. Regarding Ibn Ṭayfūr's account of Zayd b. ʿAlī, he addresses the belief that the sermon was attributed to Abū l-ʿAynāʾ (d. 283/852-53) by stating, "This narration comes from the esteemed individuals of Abū Ṭālib's household, who taught it to their children." (Ibn Ṭayfūr, *Balāghāt al-nisāʾ*, 16). Furthermore, significant Shiite figures not only transmitted this sermon but also consistently recited it.

4. For detailed information about the content of this sermon, see Ibn Ṭayfūr, *Balāghāt al-nisāʾ*, 16-23; Jawharī, *al-Saqīfa wa Fadak*, 98-101. It is important to clarify that while ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (r. 99-101/717-20) is famously known for returning Fadak (See e.g., Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 305), a closer examination of his actions reveals that he

Raid on Imam ʿAlī's Home and Fāṭima's Martyrdom

It appears that Fāṭima's sermon had a profound impact on the Anṣār. According to certain accounts, after her sermon, many of those present, who predominantly consisted of the Anṣār, were moved to tears.[1] On another account, upon hearing Fāṭima's words, Abū Bakr took to the *minbar* (pulpit) and expressed his disapproval of the Anṣār's inclination towards ʿAlī (a).[2] Possibly as a result of this sermon, the Anṣār, who already had a leaning towards ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), began to feel remorseful about their pledge of allegiance to Abū Bakr and started blaming one another. During those days, there was an incident where the Anṣār, one night, chanted the name of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) in support of him. This occurrence triggered certain individuals from the Quraysh, who held animosity towards both ʿAlī (a) and the Anṣār, to point fingers at the Anṣār. One of them remarked, "O people of Quraysh! These are the same individuals whom God referred to as al-Anṣār [the helpers] and praised extensively. Yet now, they call others to themselves and to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. So, call them back to your own leader [Abū Bakr] and have them renew their pledge of allegiance. If they refuse to comply, then engage in combat with them."[3]

As mentioned earlier, Abū Bakr dispatched ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to the residence of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) in an attempt to persuade him to pledge allegiance. However, ʿAlī (a) contested their claims and asserted his own rightful claim to the caliphate.[4] On a second occasion, and possibly because ʿAlī (a) had gained increased support from the Anṣār, his pledge of allegiance became even more crucial to those who had usurped the caliphate. Consequently, Abū Bakr sent ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to the residence of ʿAlī (a) and Fāṭima (a), where some opponents of Abū Bakr's caliphate were also present. ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb approached the door of Fāṭima's home, holding a torch in his hand. When the Prophet's daughter (a) encountered ʿUmar, she inquired, "O son of al-Khaṭṭāb, are you setting fire to the door of my home while I am inside?" He replied, "Yes, because it

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returned it to the public treasury rather than to the rightful heirs of Fāṭima (a). On the other hand, al-Maʾmūn (r. 198-218/813-33) sent a letter to the ruler of Medina in 210/825-26, commanding the return of Fadak to the heirs of Fāṭima (a). The ruler of Medina then entrusted Fadak to two individuals from the lineage of Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and Imam al-Ḥusayn (a). However, when al-Mutawakkil (r. 232-47/847-61) assumed the caliphate, he reverted Fadak back to the public treasury (Balāthurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 41-43). Regardless of whether it was ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz or al-Maʾmūn who returned Fadak to Fāṭima's heirs, the crucial point is that they recognized the illegitimacy of Abū Bakr's actions and acknowledged that Fadak had been wrongfully usurped.

1. Ibn Ṭayfūr, *Balāghāt al-nisāʾ*, 18.

2. Jawharī, *al-Saqīfa wa Fadak*, 102; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 16: 214-15.

3. Zubayr b. Bakkār, *al-Akhbār al-muwaffaqiyyāt*, 583-84.

4. Wāqidī, *al-Ridda*, 46-47.

reinforces that which your father has brought."[1] In a different account, when ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb threatened to set fire to the house despite the presence of the Prophet's daughter, Fāṭima (a) stood firm at the door and expressed her discontent. She conveyed, "There are no people who have caused me more distress than you. You abandoned the lifeless body of the Messenger of God in our hands, divided the position of caliphate among yourselves without seeking our opinion, and denied us our rightful share." These words seemed to disperse those gathered around the house. ʿUmar returned to Abū Bakr and questioned, "Are you not going to receive the pledge of allegiance from the one who has not pledged yet?" In response, Abū Bakr sent Qunfudh to ʿAlī (a), who conveyed the message that the successor of the Messenger of God (s) had summoned him. In reply, ʿAlī (a) expressed his disappointment, saying, "How quickly you attribute lies to the Messenger of God." Qunfudh reported this response to Abū Bakr. After some time, Abū Bakr sent ʿUmar along with several others to the residence of Fāṭima (a). Upon hearing their voices, she cried out, "O father! O Messenger of God! What have we witnessed from the son of al-Khaṭṭāb and the son of Abū Quḥāfa [i.e., Abū Bakr] after you!" Her words moved the people, and they began to weep and disperse from around her home. However, ʿUmar and his companions remained. They forcibly dragged ʿAlī (a) out of the house and brought him to Abū Bakr. Despite their insistence on ʿAlī (a) pledging allegiance to Abū Bakr, he questioned, "What would happen if I refuse?" They threatened, "We will behead you." In response, ʿAlī (a) declared, "In that case, you will have killed a servant of God and the brother of the Messenger of God." ʿUmar interjected, stating, "Yes, a servant of God, but not the Prophet's brother." ʿAlī (a) then proceeded towards the grave of the Prophet (s) and recited the following verses from the Quran "Son of my mother, indeed this people thought me to be weak, and they were about to kill me" (Q 7:150).[2] According to certain sources, despite these threats, ʿAlī (a) refused to pledge allegiance. As a result, Abū Bakr settled for simply touching ʿAlī's hand.[3]

In Sunni sources of hadith, the matter of the raid on Fāṭima's home or the threat to do so appears to be taken for granted.[4] Furthermore, considering Abū Bakr's expressed remorse regarding the raid on Fāṭima's home before his death,[5] it can be reasonably inferred that this event did indeed occur. According to early Shiite sources, it is reported

1. Balāthurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 586.
2. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa siyāsa*, 1: 30-31.
3. Hilālī, *K. Sulaym*, 2: 593; Masʿūdī, *Ithbāt al-waṣiyya*, 146; Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 1: 130.
4. In addition to previous sources, see Hishām b. ʿAmmār, *Ḥadīth*, 124; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Mudhakkar wa l-tadhkīr*, 91; ʿAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad, *al-Sunna*, 2: 553-54; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 126.
5. Ibn Zanjawayh, *al-Amwāl*, 1: 304; Balāthurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 10: 346; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 430.

that as a consequence of this raid, Fāṭima (a) suffered a physical blow that resulted in the miscarriage of her unborn son, Muḥsin b. ʿAlī (a).[1] This event is cited in certain non-Shiite sources as well.[2] Al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) points out that al-Naẓẓām (d. after 221/835), a prominent Muʿtazilite scholar, acknowledged this incident and stated, "On the day of pledging allegiance, a blow was struck to Fāṭima's abdomen, resulting in the miscarriage of her son."[3]

The events surrounding Fāṭima (a), including the raid on her home and the blow she endured, are extensively discussed in various books that delve into historical reports and hadiths. Notably, two such books are *Maʾsāt al-Zahrāʾ* (Tragedy of al-Zahrāʾ) by Sayyid Jaʿfar Murtaḍā al-ʿĀmilī (d. 2019) and *Muḥsin al-sibṭ, mawlūd am saqiṭ* (Muḥsin the grandson, born or miscarried) by Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī al-Khirsān (d. 2023), which specifically delves into the story of Muḥsin, the son of ʿAlī (a) and Fāṭima (a), who was miscarried as a result of the aforementioned blow.

Despite the hardships she faced, Fāṭima (a) fell ill as a consequence of these events. However, even in her illness, the Prophet's daughter (a) continued to show unwavering support for ʿAlī (a). When women from the Muhājirūn and Anṣār visited her due to her sickness, she spoke to them about the usurpation of the caliphate. She expressed that the reason behind this usurpation was due to ʿAlī's sword, his zeal in battles, and the resentments held by those who had recently converted to Islam. Fāṭima (a) then conveyed that if the caliphate had been rightfully bestowed upon ʿAlī (a), people would have enjoyed abundant divine blessings from the heavens and the earth.[4]

Due to Abū Bakr's refusal to grant her rightful inheritance and his unrightful ascension to the position of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), as noted in the Fadakiyya Sermon, Fāṭima (a) distanced herself from him. In an attempt to appease Fāṭima (a), both Abū Bakr and ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb visited her residence. Initially, the Prophet's daughter (a) denied them entry into her home. However, after ʿAlī (a) interceded on their behalf, they were eventually able to meet with Fāṭima (a). Nonetheless, She turned away her face from them. Abū Bakr attempted to speak, but in response to his justifications for denying her rights, Fāṭima (a) reminded him of the Prophet's words: "Fāṭima's satisfaction is my satisfaction, and her sorrow is my sorrow. Whoever loves Fāṭima has loved me, and

1. Hilālī, *K. Sulaym*, 2: 586; Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 113-14; Masʿūdī, *Ithbāt al-waṣiyya*, 146; Ṭabarī al-Amulī al-Ṣaghīr, *Dalāʾil al-Imāma*, 134.
2. See e.g., Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 14: 193.
3. Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa l-niḥal*, 1: 71; see also Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, 6: 17.
4. Ibn Ṭayfūr, *Balāghāt al-nisāʾ*, 23-25; Ḥākim, *Faḍāʾil Fāṭima*, 74-76.

whoever hurts her has hurt me." Abū Bakr acknowledged hearing this from the Prophet (s). Fāṭima (a) solemnly declared, "I swear by God and His angels that you have hurt me and failed to appease me. When I meet the Prophet (s) [in the hereafter], I will complain to him about you." As Abū Bakr wept, the Prophet's daughter added, "I swear by God that I curse you in every prayer I perform."[1]

Due to the same illness, Fāṭima al-Zahrāʾ (a) passed away at the age of 18, either 75 or 95 days after the Prophet's death.[2] Fāṭima (a) had expressed her wish that Abū Bakr should not perform funeral prayer on her body.[3] Therefore, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) discreetly buried Fāṭima's lifeless body and carried out the funeral prayer overnight, without the knowledge of Abū Bakr and his companions.[4] After laying his wife to rest, ʿAlī (a) turned towards the Prophet's sacred mausoleum and uttered:

> "Your trust has been returned to you, and Fāṭima now rests in the earth. O Messenger of God! My sorrow shall be everlasting, and I shall remain wakeful through each night until dawn. Grief shall be my constant companion until God guides me to the abode where you reside. How swiftly we were separated. I take my complaints to God. Your daughter will inform you of her ordeal. Inquire of her about the events that unfolded [after your departure]. The fire that burns within her heart, unable to find release, is immense."[5]

The Issue of Amīr al-Muʾminīn's Pledge of Allegiance to Abū Bakr

Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022) explicitly states, "Imami scholars believe that Imam ʿAlī (a) never gave his allegiance to Abū Bakr."[6] Earlier, it was mentioned that according to certain sources, it is claimed that Abū Bakr considered the act of touching Amīr al-Muʾminīn's hand as a form of pledging allegiance and deemed it sufficient.[7] This account can shed light on the meaning behind al-Shaykh al-Mufīd's statement. Imami scholars assert that Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) never willingly gave a pledge of allegiance to Abū Bakr that meets the requirements of a legitimate allegiance. On the contrary, certain Sunni

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1. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 31.
2. Ṣaffār, *Baṣāʾir*, 1: 153-54; Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 241, 458. According to these sources, as well as many Shiite sources, it is mentioned that Fāṭima (a) passed away 75 days after the Prophet's death. However, there is a possibility of a distortion between the Arabic spellings of "*sabʿīn*" (seventy) and "*tisʿīn*" (ninety), which gives rise to the possibility of 95 days (for mor information, see Malikiyān, "Mawlid Fāṭmat al-Zahrāʾ (a) wa Tārīkhu shahādatihā," 318-38).
3. Jawharī, *al-Saqīfa wa Fadak*, 102; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 16: 214, 264.
4. Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, 3: 521, 5: 472; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5: 139; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3: 1380; Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 1: 106, 107, 109, 110, 197.
5. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 458-49.
6. Mifīd, *al-Fuṣūl al-mukhtāra*, 56.
7. Hilālī, *K. Sulaym*, 2: 593; Masʿūdī, *Ithbāt al-waṣiyya*, 146; Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 1: 130.

sources suggest that ʿAlī (a) pledged his allegiance to Abū Bakr following Fāṭima's passing.[1]

Opposition to Abū Bakr and the Ridda Wars

Considering the events that unfolded during the wars commonly referred to as *al-Ridda* or Apostasy, it becomes evident that some of these conflicts arose as a result of some Muslims supporting Imam ʿAlī (a) and expressing their disagreement with Abū Bakr's caliphate. The Ridda Wars were triggered by two primary factors. Firstly, individuals like Musaylima al-Kadhdhāb and Ṭulayḥa b. Khuwaylid al-Asadī made Prophethood claims. Secondly, certain tribes refused to pay their *zakat* contributions to Abū Bakr's representatives.[2] Exploring one of the earliest monographs on the Ridda wars, namely *Kitāb al-ridda* by al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823), sheds light on the connection between the refusal to pay *zakat* to Abū Bakr's representatives and the issue of caliphate. In the following discussion, based on al-Wāqidī's work, we delve into the relationship between the Ridda wars and the issue of caliphate.

According to Sunni sources of hadith, it can be inferred that the Prophet (s) and his successor are the only individuals authorized to collect *zakat*.[3] During the Ridda wars, Abū l-Haytham b. al-Tayyihān composed a poem emphasizing that only the caliph or successor of the Prophet (s) is authorized to collect *zakat*.[4] When certain Arab tribes declined to pay *zakat* to Abū Bakr, he waged a war against them.

This decision faced opposition from some of the Prophet's companions, including ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, who voiced his objection to Abū Bakr by citing a hadith from the Prophet (s). The hadith states, "[God] has commanded me to fight people until they bear witness to the 'Two Testaments' [*Shahādatayn*], and once they do, their lives and property are protected." In response, Abū Bakr retorted, "If they withhold from me even a small portion of what they used to give to the Prophet (s), I will engage in combat with them."[5] Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, another critic of this action, suggested to Abū Bakr that he should refrain from collecting *zakat* that year, allowing the tribes to willingly pay their zakat shares in the following years. However, Abū Bakr remained steadfast in his

1. See e.g., Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5: 139; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3: 1380.
2. Lecker, "al-Ridda," *EI²*, 12: 692-93.
3. See e.g., Qāsim b. Sallām, *al-Amwāl*, 678-79; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 2: 284-86.
4. Wāqidī, *al-Ridda*, 30.
5. Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, 4: 43-44.

decision.[1] Moreover, certain accounts imply that a large number of the Prophet's companions were against the war with those who refused to pay *zakat*.[2]

The arguments presented by those who withheld their *zakat* payments from Abū Bakr or his representatives clearly demonstrated a link to the issue of caliphate. Among the tribes that refused to pay their *zakat* was the Tamīm tribe. Mālik b. Nuwayra, who had served as the Prophet's representative for collecting *zakat* from his own tribe during the Prophet's era, advised his tribe members to retain their *zakat* funds until a caliph was appointed. He expressed this sentiment through poetic verses, which were later conveyed to Abū Bakr himself, stating, "Once someone is identified to assume this significant position (*qāma bi l-amr al-mukhawwif*), we will obey him."[3] This occurred despite the fact that Abū Bakr had already declared himself as the Prophet's successor. Mālik's statement suggests that he did not recognize Abū Bakr as the rightful successor of the Prophet (s).

Another tribe that abstained from paying *zakat* was the Kinda tribe from Hadhramaut in Yemen. Ḥāritha b. Surāqa, a prominent leader of the Kinda, elucidated the reasoning behind their refusal to pay *zakat*, stating, "We followed the commands of the Messenger of God during his lifetime. If a person from his Household [Ahl al-Bayt] were to succeed him, we would obey him as well. However, the son of Abū Quḥāfa [i.e., Abū Bakr] holds no claim to our obedience, nor have we pledged allegiance to him."[4] Al-Ashʿath b. Qays al-Kindī, the leader of the Kinda tribe, was another individual who opposed the payment of *zakat* to Abū Bakr. He justified his stance by stating, "Retain the zakat funds for yourselves. I am aware that the Arabs do not disregard the Banū Hāshim, and they will not persist in obeying the Banū Taym [to which Abū Bakr belonged]." Additionally, he composed verses expressing the sentiment that "The Quraysh have neglected the Household of Muḥammad, despite their greater worthiness."[5]

Al-Ḥārith b. Muʿāwiya al-Kindī, one of the leaders of the Kinda tribe, confronted Ziyād b. Lubayd, Abū Bakr's representative in *zakat* collection, expressing his objection by

1. Wāqidī, *al-Ridda*, 196.

2. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 6: 312. In light of this situation, members of the al-Asad, Ghaṭafān, and Ṭayyiʾ tribes approached prominent companions of the Prophet (s), seeking their intervention with Abū Bakr to dissuade him from collecting *zakat* from them. These companions accepted their request and conveyed the message to Abū Bakr. However, similar to previous instances, Abū Bakr remained resolute in his decision. This indicates that a significant number of the Prophet's companions disagreed with the war and thus acted as intermediaries between the tribes' representatives and Abū Bakr.

3. Wāqidī, *al-Ridda*, 104-5.

4. Ibid., 171-72.

5. Ibid., 175-76.

saying, "O Ziyād! You call upon us to obey a man whom neither you nor we are obligated to obey." Ziyād acknowledged this and replied, "You are correct. We have not pledged our obedience to him. However, we have chosen him for this position [i.e., caliphate]." Al-Ḥārith responded, "Then tell me, why have you overlooked the Prophet's Household for this position when they were more deserving of it than anyone else? God says in the Quran: 'but the blood relatives are more entitled to inherit from one another in the Book of Allah' (Q 8:75)." Ziyād replied, "The Muhājirūn and Anṣār are more concerned with their own affairs than you." Al-Ḥārith retorted, "I swear by God that you have deprived them [Ahl al-Bayt] of the caliphate out of nothing but envy. I cannot believe that the Prophet (s) left this world without appointing a successor for himself." He then composed verses conveying his sentiments, stating, "We cannot believe that the Banū Hāshim are content with the caliphate of someone from the Banū Taym tribe." At that moment, another individual from the Kinda tribe stood up and exclaimed, "Al-Ḥārith b. Muʿāwiya is correct. Expel this man, as his friend [Abū Bakr] does not deserve the caliphate and has no legitimate claim to it. Furthermore, the Muhājirūn and Anṣār are not more concerned about the affairs of the Muslim nation than the Prophet (s) himself." He then composed verses expressing his viewpoint, saying, "Convey to Abū Bakr that he is the most unjust of men. May God's curse be upon those who pledged allegiance to you. Do you hold this position [i.e., caliphate] without any familial connection and through unjust means?"[1]

During one incident, when the prisoners from the Tamīm tribe were brought to Medina,[2] a woman from among them encountered ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) and addressed him, saying, "Are you the one whom the Messenger of God introduced to us on the day of Ghadīr al-Khumm?" ʿAlī (a) affirmed, "Yes, I am the one." The woman expressed, "We are facing this calamity because we supported you. Our men refused to pay zakat on their wealth except to you, as they believed you were designated by Muḥammad as the criterion, and they would not obey anyone but you." Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) assured her, "Your efforts will not be in vain. God will reward each person according to their sincere intentions."[3]

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1. Ibid., 176-78.

2. When the Tamīm tribe persisted in their refusal to pay *zakat*, Khālid b. al-Walīd led an attack against them. Despite objections raised by certain senior figures accompanying him, he resorted to beheading their men and capturing their women and children (Ibid., 176-78).

3. Ibn Shādhān, *al-Faḍāʾil*, 100-1. Al-Qāḍī Nūr Allāh al-Tustarī (d. 1019/1610) also states that the real guilt of those who were attacked by Abu Bakr in the Ridda wars was the fact that they had supported Imam ʿAlī's right to caliphate (Tustarī, *al-Ṣawārim al-muhriqa*, 83-84). To understand the connection between the Ridda Wars and the issue of

ʿAlī's Scholarly Status during This Era

ʿAlī (a) is recognized as one of the jurists during the era of Abū Bakr. People sought his knowledge and expertise in Islamic jurisprudence or Islamic law.[1] When Abū Bakr faced a dilemma in issuing a ruling regarding a man who was unaware of the Islamic laws regarding wine-drinking, ʿAlī (a) proposed a solution. He suggested, "Appoint two trustworthy Muslims to accompany him and inquire among the Muhājirūn and Anṣār communities if anyone had instructed him about the prohibition of consuming wine according to the Quranic verse or the teachings of the Prophet (s). If two witnesses confirm that he received such instruction, then the prescribed punishment [*ḥadd*] should be applied. However, if no one testifies to his prior knowledge, he should be asked to repent and subsequently released." As no witnesses came forward to testify, Abū Bakr chose to release the individual. In another instance, a question was posed to Abū Bakr regarding the interpretation of verse 31 of Surah al-ʿAbas (80). The inquirer expressed, "We understand the meaning of *fākiha* (fruit), but we are unsure about the meaning of *abb*." Upon being informed of this, ʿAlī (a) provided an explanation, stating, "*Abb* signifies plant, grass, and pasture." Similarly, there was a situation where Abū Bakr faced difficulty in interpreting the term *kalāla* in the Quran (Q 4:176). ʿAlī (a) clarified the matter, saying, "Does he not know that *kalāla* refers to siblings from both the father's and mother's side, or from the father's side alone, or from the mother's side alone?" Furthermore, when a Jewish individual expressed skepticism regarding Abū Bakr's response regarding God's settlement on the throne, ʿAlī (a) intervened and stated, "God, the Mighty and Exalted, is the creator of all places and is too sublime to be confined to a place. God is omnipresent, and His knowledge encompasses everything."[2]

Following the loss of a significant number of Quranic reciters and memorizers during the Battle of al-Yamāma in 12/633, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb suggested to Abū Bakr the imperative need to compile and organize the Quran. In response, ʿAlī (a) reminded them of his prior commitment to the Prophet (s), in which he had promised to compile the whole Quran in its entirety.[3] Subsequently, ʿAlī (a) gathered all that he had compiled and

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the illegitimacy of Abu Bakr's caliphate from the perspective of the tribes who refused to pay *Zakat*, see Khaghani, "Ḥurūb al-Ridda wa azmat shaʿiyyat al-Khilāfa; Dirāsat[un] fī ʿilal manʿ al-Zakāt min qibal al-Qabāʾil al-Muslima."

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 138.

2. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 199-202.

3. According to certain accounts, one of the reasons for ʿAlī's seclusion in his home was his commitment to fulfill a promise he made to the Prophet (s), as he had pledged not to leave his home until he completed the task of compiling the entire Quran (Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 30; Balāthurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 586, 587).

placed it on the back of a camel, transporting it to Abū Bakr.[1] According to another account, Imam ʿAlī (a) presented to the people what he had gathered through the Prophet's dictation and his own handwriting. He stated, "[I have brought these] to ensure that on the Day of Resurrection, you cannot claim that I did not seek your assistance, remind you of my right, or invite you to the Book of God from its beginning to its end." In response, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb remarked, "What we currently possess from the Quran is sufficient for us, and we do not require what you have brought." Consequently, ʿAlī (a) took his compiled Quran back to his home.[2] Furthermore, another account has it that this significant event took place seven days after the passing of the Prophet (s). After compiling the Quran, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) delivered a sermon, which later became renowned as the *al-Wasīla* Sermon. In this eloquent address, he touched upon his enduring struggles and virtues throughout the era of the Prophet (s), while also asserting his rightful claim to the position of caliphate.[3]

While it is true that in a later sermon known as *al-Shiqshiqiyya*,[4] ʿAlī (a) criticized Abū Bakr for disregarding his right to caliphate, and during the event of Fadak, he engaged in a dispute with Abū Bakr in support of his wife and refrained from pledging allegiance to him, it is worth noting that he ultimately chose silence. This decision was motivated by a greater interest, namely the preservation of the religion, the well-being of the Islamic community, the unity among Muslims, and the prevention of any divisions among them.

ʿAlī (a) during the Era of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb

There is a paucity of historical information regarding the events involving Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) during the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. Various sources mention instances where ʿAlī (a) rectified ʿUmar's judicial rulings, provided him with consultation, and had limited responsibilities such as overseeing the distribution of the Prophet's relics among the people of Medina. Based on the accounts found in different sources, it can be inferred that Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) chose to avoid direct involvement in political matters and instead focused on providing counsel on public affairs in alignment with the interests of Islam and the Muslim community. Additionally, the

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 135-36.
2. Hilālī, *K. Sulaym*, 2: 581-82.
3. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 18-20.
4. ʿAlī opens this sermon as follows: "By God, that man donned its cloak knowing that I am the pivot to its grinding stone—its stream flows from my summit and no soaring bird can reach my heights." (Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 3; see also Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 287-90).

hadiths attributed to him indicate his concern for guiding people in matters of religious beliefs.[1]

Before his passing, Abū Bakr designated ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb as his successor.[2] This designation encountered opposition from some of the companions of the Prophet (s), who expressed concerns about ʿUmar's negative temperament and his tendency to tyrannizing behavior, which they believed would disqualify him as a ruler.[3]

During the era of the second caliph, ʿAlī (a) was one of the figures who imparted knowledge of Islamic law and jurisprudence to the people.[4] During the Battle of Dhāt al-ʿAshīra in 2/623, the Prophet (s) bestowed a piece of land in Yanbu[5] upon ʿAlī (a). Furthermore, at this time, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) acquired various other plots of land using his own resources, where he redirected water springs to create flowing creeks. He dedicated these lands and their yields to support the poor, homeless, and needy travelers. ʿAlī (a) personally cultivated and nurtured these lands, even constructing a mosque within their vicinity.[6]

In the years 16-18/637-40,[7] ʿUmar sought the advice of the Muhājirūn and Anṣār in order to establish the origin of the calendar. Initially, he considered designating the year of the Prophet's birth as the starting point of the new calendar.[8] However, Imam ʿAlī (a) proposed that the migration of the Prophet (s) to Medina should be marked as the beginning of the Islamic calendar. After this suggestion was accepted by ʿUmar and those present, that particular year was officially recognized as the starting point of the Hijri calendar.[9] There are accounts indicating that ʿUmar sought the advice and guidance of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) on various governmental matters. This included decisions concerning the lands that were conquered in Kufa during the period of conquests,[10] as well as the determination not to sell the curtain of the Kaaba to equip the army.[11] ʿUmar

1. See the chapter "Imam ʿAlī (a) and Theological Teachings" in this book.
2. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 136-37.
3. Abū Yūsuf, *al-Kharāj*, 25; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 149; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 358.
4. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 161.
5. Yanbu (*Yanbuʿ*) is a coastal area located on the shores of the Red Sea, approximately seven stations away from Medina (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 5: 450).
6. Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 1: 221.
7. See Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 145; Masʿūdī, *al-Tanbīh wa l-ishrāf*, 252.
8. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 145.
9. Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 15; Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 2: 756.
10. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 151-2.
11. Shrīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 270.

b. al-Khaṭṭāb appointed ʿAlī (a) and ʿAbbās, the Prophet's uncle, to oversee the fair distribution of charities and endowed property of Prophet Muḥammad (s) in Medina.[1]

According to a hadith, during his caliphate, when Kaʿb al-Aḥbār asked ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb about the final words of the Prophet (s), ʿUmar deferred the answer to ʿAlī (a). ʿAlī (a) responded by saying, "The last words of the Messenger of God were a recommendation to observe the prayer."[2] Furthermore, when ʿUmar encountered difficulty in responding to the inquiries posed by Jewish scholars regarding the system of creation, Salmān al-Fārsī promptly proposed that ʿAlī (a) be consulted for the answers. Subsequently, ʿAlī (a) provided the necessary responses to the questions.[3]

ʿAlī's Judicial Rulings during ʿUmar's Era

During this period, ʿUmar frequently sought the counsel of ʿAlī (a) when it came to resolving disputes. As a result, numerous quotes from ʿUmar highlighting the religious authority of ʿAlī (a) can be found in hadith and historical sources. In one instance, ʿUmar expressed that he would take refuge to God if a predicament arose while ʿAlī (a) was not available.[4] Moreover, he consistently acknowledged the superiority of ʿAlī (a) in matters of judgeship.[5] According to certain sources, it is reported that ʿUmar said, "If it were not for ʿAlī (a), ʿUmar would have been destroyed."[6] On another occasion, he addressed ʿAlī (a), saying, "O Abā l-Ḥasan! I seek refuge in God if I were to live in a community where you are not present."[7]

When Maʿn b. Zā'ida forged the caliphate stamp and embezzled funds from the taxes of Kufa, and ʿUmar was informed of the incident, he sought the advice of ʿAlī (a) on how to handle the situation involving Maʿn.[8] Qudāma b. Maẓʿūn, who happened to be ʿUmar's brother-in-law (married to his sister), was involved in drinking wine. When confronted with this issue, he used verse 93 of Surah al-Ma'ida (5) to argue against ʿUmar's enforcement of the religious punishment. However, ʿAlī (a) objected to the caliph's decision, referencing the same verse and stating, "Those who believe and do righteous deeds do not make what God has forbidden permissible." As ʿUmar was uncertain about

1. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 1: 239-40.
2. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 201.
3. Ibn Ṭhwūs, *al-Taḥṣīn*, 642-43.
4. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 647.
5. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 259; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 6: 19; Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 2: 706.
6. Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 3: 1103.
7. Azraqī, *Akhbār Makka*, 1: 324; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 1: 628.
8. Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 444-45.

the appropriate punishment for Qudāma, he ultimately decided to follow ʿAlī's advice and ordered him to be lashed 80 times.[1]

In another incident, when ʿAlī (a) brought to ʿUmar's attention that individuals who are mentally unstable are not held accountable for religious obligations, the caliph decided to revoke the punishment of a mentally unstable woman who had committed adultery with a man and subsequently fled. Likewise, in another situation where the caliph intended to stone an adulterous woman who was pregnant, ʿAlī (a) referred to verse 18 of Surah al-Fāṭir (35), establishing that the ruling should be deferred until after the childbirth. ʿUmar accepted and acted upon ʿAlī's advice.[2]

In another case, a woman who worked as a prostitute fled out of fear from ʿUmar's agents, resulting in the miscarriage of her unborn baby. In this situation, ʿAlī (a) decreed that the responsibility for the blood money of the miscarried baby fell upon the caliph. Consequently, ʿUmar fulfilled this ruling and paid the blood money.[3] Furthermore, a woman was presented before ʿUmar, who had given birth to a baby after only six months of marriage. The caliph was inclined to stone her on charges of adultery. However, ʿAlī (a) referred to verse 233 of Surah al-Baqara (2) and verse 15 of Surah al-Aḥqāf (46) to establish that a baby can be born prematurely at six months. Consequently, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb rescinded the punishment of stoning for the woman based on ʿAlī's citation of these verses.[4]

During the era of ʿUmar, a dispute arose between two women over the custody of a child. However, neither of them presented any evidence to support their claims. Faced with uncertainty about how to resolve the case, ʿUmar sought the intervention of ʿAlī (a). Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) initially advised the two women and warned them about the consequences in the hereafter, urging them to reconsider their claims. However, both women persisted in their assertions. In response, Imam ʿAlī (a) ordered a saw to be brought forward, suggesting that the baby be divided into two halves so that each woman could have an equal portion. It was at this point that one woman remained silent while the other cried and gave up her claim. Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) ruled that the baby belonged to the woman who had relinquished her claim, as the silence of the other woman indicated that the child did not belong to her.[5]

1. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 202-3.
2. Ibid., 1: 203-4.
3. Ibid., 1: 204-5.
4. Ibid., 1: 206.
5. Ibid., 1: 205-6

Al-Mughīra b. Shuʿba engaged in a relationship with a married woman, and on one occasion, four companions of the Prophet (s) inadvertently witnessed him involved in sexual intercourse with her. Abū Bakra (Nufayʿ b. al-Ḥārith) approached ʿUmar and reported what he and the other three witnesses had seen. Upon hearing this, ʿUmar requested all four witnesses to come forward. While three of them testified without hesitation, the fourth witness hesitated in providing his testimony. As a result, ʿUmar imposed the punishment for *qadhf* [1] on Abū Bakra and the other two witnesses. After Abū Bakra had already received his punishment, he persisted in his claim. ʿUmar contemplated punishing him again for *qadhf*, but ʿAlī (a) intervened and stated, "[If you consider Abū Bukra's statement as a valid testimony,] then you should stone Mughīra."[2]

Amīr al-Muʾminīn, ʿAlī (a), consistently maintained his scholarly independence in his interactions with the caliph. In one instance, ʿUmar noticed that ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib was wearing a colored ihram. Expressing his disapproval, the caliph confronted him. In response, ʿAlī (a) stated, "I never imagined that anyone could [presume to] instruct us on the traditions [of the Prophet (s)]." Upon hearing these words, ʿUmar fell silent.[3]

ʿUmar's Counsels with Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a)

While it is true that certain supporters and companions of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) played significant roles in the conquests during ʿUmar's era,[4] there is no recorded evidence of ʿAlī's direct involvement in those conquests. In some instances, ʿUmar sought the counsel of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) regarding matters related to the conquests.

When Abū ʿUbayda al-Jarrāḥ reached the Yarmuk region[5] to engage the Romans in battle, he requested assistance from ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. The caliph approached ʿAlī (a) seeking his counsel on waging war against the Romans. ʿAlī (a) responded, "When you lead the expedition against the enemy, if you engage them and are pushed back, our fighters will have no stronghold to give them refuge and will flee to distant lands. If you are gone, they will have no community to which to return. Instead, dispatch a seasoned

1. *Qadhf* refers to the act of accusing someone of adultery without providing sufficient witnesses or strong evidence. In accordance with verse 4 of Surah al-Nūr (24), the prescribed punishment for this offense is 80 lashes.
2. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 146.
3. Shāfiʿī, *Musnad*, 2: 207-8.
4. For a list of their names, see Ranjbar, "Mawāziʿ-i Imām ʿAlī (a) dar barābar-i futūḥāt-i Khulafā," 59-61.
5. An area in the Levant (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 5: 434).

fighter accompanied."[1] During the conquest of Jerusalem (*Bayt al-Maqdis*) and Caesarea,[2] there is another notable incident where ʿAlī (a) suggested to ʿUmar that they should instruct Abū ʿUbayda al-Jarrāḥ to begin the siege of Jerusalem before moving on to capture Caesarea.[3]

Additionally, according to al-Ṭabarī, in the year 14/635, when ʿUmar made the decision to visit Iraq due to distressing reports regarding the situation of the Muslims there, he initially appointed ʿAlī (a) as his deputy in Medina. However, after considering the opinions of the companions, he changed his mind and instead sent Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ to Iraq.[4] At the onset of the Battle of al-Qādisiyya,[5] upon learning about the formidable size of the Iranian army, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb made the decision to personally lead the war. He sought counsel from ʿAlī (a) regarding this matter, who advised him, "You should personally engage in the battle as it instills greater fear in the enemy." However, a group of companions of ʿUmar dissuaded him from going to Iraq. It was during this time that the command of the Islamic army was proposed to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), but he declined the offer.[6] Moreover, in one account, during a military campaign en route to the Levant, ʿUmar addressed ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, saying, "O Ibn ʿAbbās! I wish to express my complaint regarding your cousin [ʿAlī (a)]. I requested his presence with me, but he declined."[7]

Following the Battle of al-Qādisiyya, when ʿUmar found himself in a predicament after removing Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ and faced uncertainty in selecting a successor, he resolved to travel to Iraq personally. However, ʿAlī (a) voiced his opposition to this decision, cautioning, "If you abandon this land, Arabs from all directions and places will rise against you." Confirming ʿAlī's perspective, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb changed his mind and refrained from participating in the battle against the Iranians.[8]

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1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 134.
2. In Arabic, al-Qaysāriyya, a large city on the Mediterranean coast near Palestine, and one of the largest cities of the Eastern Roman Empire (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 4: 421).
3. Wāqidī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 1: 220.
4. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 480-83.
5. Qādisiyya, located near Kufa, was the site of a significant battle between the Muslims and Sassanids in 14/635. This battle, known as the Battle of Qādisiyya, resulted in a decisive victory for the Muslims.
6. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 309-10; see also Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 251.
7. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 12: 78.
8. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 207-10; see also Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 122-25.

In the year 16/635, following the Battle of Jalūlāʾ,[1] ʿUmar faced the decision of dividing the lands surrounding Kufa. Seeking guidance from the companions of the Prophet (s), various opinions were presented. Some advocated for the lands to be distributed among the Muslims, while ʿAlī (a) suggested that the lands should remain in the possession of their original owners, stating, "If you divide these lands today, there will be nothing left for those who come after us. However, if you allow them to retain ownership, they will cultivate and develop them, ensuring their preservation for us and future generations." ʿUmar ultimately adopted ʿAlīʾs opinion.[2]

It appears that ʿAlī (a) held a differing stance from ʿUmar regarding the policy of retaining funds within the treasury. When the caliph sought ʿAlīʾs advice on the matter, he advised him, saying, "Distribute all the wealth that accumulates [in the treasury] and do not withhold anything."[3]

When the Battle of Nahāvand commenced against the Iranians in 21/641, a suggestion was put forth to ʿUmar proposing that he relocate the residents of the Levant, Yemen, and Basra, and personally join them in Kufa. The caliph sought ʿAlīʾs advice on this matter, and in response, ʿAlī (a) cautioned, "If you withdraw the entire army from the Levant, their women and children will be vulnerable to attack. Similarly, if the entire army of Yemen departs, they will be targeted by the Abyssinians. Moreover, if you leave, you may find yourself more concerned about your rear than your front. When the Iranians see you directly opposing them, they will perceive you as the Arab king and fight you with greater force. Therefore, I recommend that you instruct two-thirds of the Levant's army to remain in the Levant, and only one-third of them should relocate. The same should apply to the people of other regions."[4]

Perhaps it was during this period that ʿAlī (a) advised ʿUmar, saying, "There are three principles that, if followed, will render everything else unnecessary: implementing religious punishments impartially for relatives and strangers, ruling according to the Book of God in times of both contentment and anger, and ensuring fair distribution [of the treasury's resources] to people of all backgrounds."[5] This counsel suggests that Amīr al-ʿMuʾminīn did not support the distribution of the treasury's resources based on individuals' backgrounds or their Arab or non-Arab lineage. It was under the rule of

1. The Battle of Jalūlāʾ took place in 16/637 in the region of Jalūlāʾ in Iraq. It was a significant confrontation between the Muslims and the Sassanids, ultimately resulting in a decisive victory for the Muslims.
2. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 151-52.
3. Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 431-32.
4. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 134-35; see also Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 206-10.
5. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 208.

ʿUmar that the concept of a *dīwān*[1] was introduced, and the treasury's resources were allocated with consideration given to people's social classes.[2] Perhaps influenced by ʿAlī's counsel, during the last year of his life, ʿUmar expressed his intention, stating, "If I live through this year, I will ensure an equal distribution of the treasury's resources, without favoring reds over blacks or Arabs over non-Arabs. I will follow the example set by the Prophet (s) and Abū Bakr."[3]

It should be noted, however, that ʿUmar did not adopt all of ʿAlī's suggestions. During the time of the Prophet (s) and Abū Bakr's caliphate, everyone was entitled to receive a share from the treasury on an annual basis. If a person passed away, their share would be paid to their heirs as per the established tradition. However, there is an account where ʿUmar departed from this practice. Contrary to the precedent set by the Prophet (s) and Abū Bakr, ʿUmar refused to distribute the shares of the deceased to their heirs. This included the shares of individuals such as Zayd b. Ḥāritha, Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib, and Ṣafiyya bt. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib. Additionally, ʿUmar disregarded ʿAlī's recommendation to honor the payment of funds to the heirs of the deceased.[4]

In response to the grievances raised by a group of individuals regarding the accumulation of wealth and financial misconduct by the appointed rulers during the time of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, he devised a measure known as *mushāṭara* to address the issue. This initiative involved the confiscation of half of the wealth possessed by those rulers, allowing them to retain the remaining half.[5] Interestingly, after a while, he reinstated those same corrupt rulers to governmental positions.[6] ʿAlī (a) expressed criticism towards ʿUmar for his policies, especially the reappointment of those individuals as rulers of provinces.[7]

Six-Member Council of Caliphate

In a particular account, when ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb asked about ʿAlī's qualification for the caliphate, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās responded, "Why shouldn't he deserve it? He possesses virtue, a [brilliant] background [in Islam], kinship with the Prophet (s), and knowledge."

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1. The term *dīwān* referred to a written record where the names of soldiers and individuals receiving pensions from the treasury were documented (Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya*, 2: 150).
2. ʿAskarī, *al-Awā'il*, 164-66.
3. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 154.
4. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 297-98.
5. BalāDhurī, *Alsāb al-ashrāf*, 10: 385.
6. Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 89.
7. Hilālī, *K. Sulaym*, 2: 676.

ʿUmar acknowledged, "Indeed, he possesses these qualities, and if I appoint him to lead the people, he will guide them on the right path and follow the clear proofs ... However, he is considered too young." Drawing attention to ʿAlī's courage displayed in the battles of Badr and the Trench, where many renowned and brave companions of the Prophet (s) did not show such valor, Ibn ʿAbbās queried, "Why did you not consider him young during those times?" In response, ʿUmar declared, "I swear by God, O Ibn ʿAbbās! Your cousin ʿAlī deserves the caliphate more than anyone else, but the Quraysh will not tolerate his leadership. If he becomes their guardian, he will confront them with the harsh reality ... And if he does so, they [i.e., the Quraysh] will break their oath of allegiance to him."[1]

During the last year of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's life, while the Hajj season was underway, he became aware of certain individuals who were planning to pledge allegiance to a specific individual.[2] Upon returning to Medina from the Hajj pilgrimage, ʿUmar ascended the *minbar* (pulpit). He proceeded to narrate the events that took place at Saqīfa Banū Sāʿida, emphasizing that the pledge of allegiance to Abū Bakr had been hasty and impulsive (*falta*).[3] In light of this, he issued a command that anyone who receives a similar pledge of allegiance in the future should be put to death.[4]

Upon his assassination, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb established a six-member council to determine his successor. The council consisted of ʿAlī (a), Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf.[5] Furthermore, prior to his passing, ʿUmar issued a directive stating that if a member of the six-member council was chosen as his successor, anyone who opposed this decision would face beheading as a consequence.[6]

According to certain accounts, when ʿAlī (a) became aware of the composition of the council, he expressed to ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib his belief that these individuals would

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 158-59.

2. In most sources, the specific names of the speakers and the intended recipient of the pledge of allegiance are not mentioned. However, in some accounts, it is attributed to figures such as al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām (Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 581), ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, or Ṭalḥa (Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 2: 25-26). These individuals expressed their intention to pledge allegiance to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) following the passing of ʿUmar.

3. The term *al-falta* signifies an impulsive action characterized by thoughtlessness and abruptness (Farāhīdī, *K. al-ʿAyn*, 8: 122).

4. Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, 5: 439-45; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2: 657-60; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 8: 168-70.

5. See e.g., Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 44-45; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 7: 436; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2: 103; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 500; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 160.

6. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 45, 260; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 7: 439; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 501, 503, 504.

never select him as the successor.[1] Later, during his own caliphate, in the *al-Shiqshiqiyya* Sermon, ʿAlī (a) voiced his protest against the council in the following manner: "Thus it was, until, when he [i.e., ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb] went on his way, he handed it over to a group of people he supposed I belonged with. Dear God, what a Council! Was there doubt regarding my stature, even in comparison with the first of them, that I was now being equated with these laggards! But I moved with them, falling when they fell and flying when they flew. Even so, one of them turned away from me because of an old grudge, another inclined toward someone else because he was related to him by marriage, along with this one and that one."[2]

ʿAlī (a) in the Era of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān

After the passing of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb in the closing days of Dhū l-Ḥijja 23/November 644,[3] ʿAlī (a) took part in the council responsible for selecting ʿUmar's successor, even though he was aware that the majority of council members would not choose him. His primary motivation for participating was to prevent any potential conflicts and divisions.

The Six-Member Council and Selection of ʿUthmān

During the process of selecting the caliph within the six-member council, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf engaged in a private conversation with ʿAlī (a). He expressed, "May God bear witness that if you assume this position [i.e., caliphate], you should govern among us based on the Book of God and the practices of His Messenger, Abū Bakr, and ʿUmar." In response, ʿAlī (a) stated, "Indeed, with the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet (s), there is no need for any other methods. You are trying to distance the position of caliphate from me."[4] During the council meeting, when ʿAbd al-Raḥmān pledged his allegiance to ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, ʿAlī (a) confronted him saying, "You did this because he is your son-in-law. I swear by God, you have the same expectations from ʿUthmān as your friend [i.e., ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb] had from his friend [i.e., Abū Bakr]."[5] In a different account, when ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf pledged allegiance to ʿUthmān, he remarked, "I swear by God, you have granted him a gift for life. This is not the first time you have rebelled against [and usurped our rights]: 'Yet patience is graceful, and Allah is my resort

1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 229-30; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 285-86.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 3.
3. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 159.
4. Ibid., 2: 162; see also Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 1: 560; Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 3: 930.
5. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 286-87.

against what you allege' (Q 12:18). I swear by God, you have appointed ʿUthmān to this position with the intention that he will appoint you as the caliph after him."[1]

Objections to ʿUthmān's Selection

Upon the appointment of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān as the caliph, several prominent individuals, including al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad, Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī and ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd, began to criticize him and express their support for ʿAlī (a). In a speech, al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad stated, "It is astonishing how the Quraysh have denied the caliphate to the Prophet's Household, even though ʿAlī was the first believer, the Prophet's cousin, the most knowledgeable about God's religion, and the one who suffered the most for the cause of Islam. He is the one who guides them best to the right path. I swear by God that they have unjustly taken away the caliphate from the rightly guided one. Their intentions were not aligned with the interests of the Islamic community or the path of righteousness. Instead, they prioritized worldly gains over the hereafter."[2]

In a sermon, ʿAlī (a) himself voiced his dissatisfaction with the appointment of ʿUthmān.[3] Furthermore, it is reported that when ʿAlī (a) observed the inclination of the council members towards selecting ʿUthmān, he engaged in a discussion with them, compelling them to acknowledge his own virtues. This dialogue, famously known as *Ḥadīth al-Munāshada* or Hadith of Mutual Oath, witnessed Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) highlighting his own valor and that of his family, with each member affirming his words. Among the virtues mentioned by ʿAlī (a) in this dialogue were his distinction as the first one to embrace Islam, his role in Ḥadīth al-Manzila, and his involvement in the significant event of al-Ghadīr.[4] Furthermore, during his own caliphate, ʿAlī (a) referenced these events and expressed his grievances in a sermon famously known as *al-Shiqshiqiyya*, as previously mentioned.

ʿAlī's Judgeships during ʿUthmān's Era

The initial disagreement between ʿAlī (a) and ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān concerning judicial matters arose when ʿAlī (a) expressed his objection to ʿUthmān's refusal to carry out retaliatory execution (*qiṣāṣ*) on ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿUmar. This objection stemmed from the brutal and unjustified murder committed by ʿUbayd Allāh against several non-Arabs in

1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 233.
2. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 163.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 74.
4. To know the details of this event, see Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 1: 135-45; see also Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 431-33, 433-35.

Medina. The events unfolded as follows: After the assassination of ʿUmar, his son ʿUbayd Allāh discovered a dagger that resembled the one used by Abū Luʾluʾa to kill the Second Caliph. The dagger was in the possession of Hurmuzān, an Iranian resident of Medina. In a secluded location, ʿUbayd Allāh confronted Hurmuzān, brandishing his sword. At this moment, Hurmuzān proclaimed the Two Testimonies (*Shahādatayn*), indicating his faith, but ʿUbayd Allāh disregarded this plea and fatally struck him with his sword. Subsequently, ʿUbayd Allāh approached Jufayna, a Christian from al-Ḥīra, and killed him too. He then targeted Abū Luʾluʾa's young daughter, who had professed her belief in Islam, and took her life as well. ʿUbayd Allāh's intention was to seek revenge by killing all non-Arab residents of Medina for his father's blood. However, some individuals and the companions of the Prophet (s) intervened, thwarting his plan and preventing further bloodshed.[1]

After the arrest of ʿUbayd Allāh, ʿUthmān sought the counsel of the Prophet's companions regarding the appropriate course of action. In this regard, ʿAlī (a) expressed his opinion that ʿUbayd Allāh should face the penalty of execution. His reasoning was based on the fact that ʿUbayd Allāh had committed the murder of a fellow Muslim, Hurmuzān, as well as the killing of a child, Abū Luʾluʾa's daughter, who held the status of a Muslim, and a non-Muslim individual who had entered into a treaty with the Muslim community (known as a *dhimmī*). However, Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ convinced ʿUthmān to pardon ʿUbayd Allāh for his crimes and instead ruled that the blood money should be paid from the treasury.[2]

During the early years of ʿUthmān's caliphate, the caliph ordered the separation of the rituals of Umrah and Hajj. However, ʿAlī (a) voiced his disagreement with this ruling and performed both Umrah and Hajj together as a unified act.[3] During the time when ʿUthmān had imposed a prohibition on the utterance of *talbiya*, which is the phrase "allāhumma laka labbayk" (meaning "Here I am, O Allah, at Your service"), ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) chose to perform the *talbiya* regardless. This action of ʿAlī (a) angered ʿUthmān, who questioned him, saying, "You can see that I have forbidden this, yet you still do it?" In response, ʿAlī (a) firmly stated, "I would not abandon the tradition of the Prophet (s) for the sake of anyone."[4]

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1. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 271; see also Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, 5: 478-79; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, 187.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 239; see also Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 5: 11-12; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 510.
3. Mālik b. Anas, *Muwaṭṭaʾ*, 1: 336. During a particular form of the Hajj pilgrimage referred to as "*Qirān*" Hajj, the individual combines the acts of both ʿUmrah and Hajj within a single intention.
4. Ṭayālisī, *Musnad*, 1: 94; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2: 142.

During the era of ʿUthmān, a woman gave birth after only six months into her marriage. This circumstance, as the usual duration of pregnancy is nine months, led to accusations of adultery being leveled against her. Given that she was married, ʿUthmān, as the ruler, decreed that she should be stoned to death for the alleged offense. Upon learning of this ruling, ʿAlī (a) approached ʿUthmān and countered it by citing the verse: "and his gestation and weaning take thirty months" (Q 46:15). He argued that the period of pregnancy and breastfeeding combined amounts to 30 months, or two and a half years. Additionally, he referenced the verse: "Mothers shall suckle their children for two full years" (Q 2:233), which specifies the breastfeeding period as two years. By presenting these verses, ʿAlī (a) aimed to demonstrate that it was possible for a woman to give birth within six months without engaging in adultery. Consequently, he concluded that the stoning verdict was invalid. However, despite ʿUthmān's subsequent attempt to intervene by sending someone after the woman, it was discovered that she had already been stoned to death.[1]

The Beginning of Popular Protests against ʿUthmān and His Reaction

In 29/649-50, for the first time people expressed explicit and strong protests against ʿUthmān as he performed full, instead of shortened, prayers in the Mina region. Many of the Prophet's companions reproached him for this action. ʿAlī (a) told him "Neither something [new] has unfolded, nor have we strayed too far from the early period of Islam and the Prophet's era. You do remember that the Prophet (s) performed his prayers here [as shortened] within two *rakʿas*. I do not understand what you are going back to."[2]

Treatment of ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd

When ʿUthmān appointed his stepbrother al-Walīd b. ʿUqba as the ruler of Kufa, ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd, a respected companion of the Prophet (s) who resided in Kufa, strongly voiced his objection to this appointment. In a letter addressed to ʿUthmān, al-Walīd mentioned that Ibn Masʿūd was reproaching the caliph and speaking against him. Upon receiving the letter, ʿUthmān took the decision to have Ibn Masʿūd sent to Medina. Upon arriving in Medina, ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd immediately headed to the mosque. Meanwhile, ʿUthmān was delivering a speech from the pulpit (*minbar*) and used derogatory terms to refer to Ibn Masʿūd. In response, Ibn Masʿūd emphasized his own companionship of the

1. Mālik b. Anas, *Muwaṭṭaʾ*, 2: 825; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 174. To know some other ʿAlī's jujment, see Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 210-12.
2. Ṭabrī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 267.

Prophet (s) during the Battle of Badr and the Pledge of the Tree (*Bauʿat al-Riḍwān*).[1] ʿĀ'isha was deeply disturbed by ʿUthmān's disrespectful remarks and openly protested against him for speaking in such a manner towards a companion of the Prophet (s) in a public setting. In response to her protest, ʿUthmān gave the order to have Ibn Masʿūd forcibly removed from the mosque and beaten. Witnessing this unjust treatment, ʿAlī (a) confronted ʿUthmān and said, "O ʿUthmān! Are you subjecting the Prophet's companion to such treatment solely based on al-Walīd's words?" ʿAlī (a) then took Ibn Masʿūd to his own house to tend to his injuries. Subsequently, ʿUthmān issued a decree placing Ibn Masʿūd under house arrest, prohibiting him from leaving Medina. As time passed, ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd fell ill and remained bedridden. During this period, he expressed his wish that ʿUthmān should not be allowed to lead funeral prayer upon his body.[2]

Delaying the Religious Punishment on al-Walīd b. ʿUqba

During the seventh year of ʿUthmān's caliphate, specifically in 30/650-51, al-Walīd b. ʿUqba reportedly led congregational prayers in the mosque while he was drunk. Due to his state of intoxication, he inadvertently performed the *two-rakʿa* morning prayers as four *rakʿas*. Subsequently, as a result of his excessive intoxication, he vomited in the mihrab. In his impaired state, he then asked those present in the mosque, "Should I perform more *rakʿas*?"[3] Following this incident, he was relieved of his position as the ruler of Kufa and subsequently summoned to Medina. ʿAlī (a) played a major role in administering the religious punishment on him.

Initially, ʿUthmān procrastinated in carrying out the punishment for wine drinking on al-Walīd. A group of Kufa residents traveled to Medina to provide testimony that al-Walīd had consumed wine. However, ʿUthmān punished some of them on accusations of giving false testimonies. This action sparked a strong protest from Imam ʿAlī (a), who reproached ʿUthmān by saying, "You have failed to implement the religious punishment and whipped those who testified against you brother [al-Walīd]. You have overturned the rulings."[4] During this period, there was a surge of protests against ʿUthmān due to his reluctance in enforcing religious punishments. Many people expressed their discontent and protested against his actions.[5] Eventually, due to the mounting protests from the

1. It is important to note that Ibn Masʿūd's mention of being among the companions of the Pledge of the Tree was actually intended as a sarcastic remark directed towards ʿUthmān due to his absence during that pledge.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 524-26.
3. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 165.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 522.
5. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 52.

people and the recommendations of Imam ʿAlī (a), ʿUthmān was compelled to impose punishment on al-Walīd. However, because of al-Walīd's close relationship with ʿUthmān, no one came forward to carry out the punishment. In response, Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a) personally executed the punishment. Following these events, ʿUthmān appointed al-Walīd as his representative to collect *zakat* contributions from the Kalb and Balqīn tribes.[1]

The incidents, coupled with ʿUthmān's reluctance to implement religious punishments, caused ʿĀ'isha, the wife of the Prophet (s), to openly criticize the caliph for his failure to enforce religious rulings. Her words triggered a strong reaction from ʿUthmān, who sternly rebuked ʿĀ'isha, stating, "This is not your concern. You were commanded to stay at home [and refrain from intervening in these matters]." Consequently, these remarks ignited a division among Muslims, with one faction supporting the Prophet's wife and another backing the caliph. These divisions eventually led to conflicts between the two groups.[2]

Luxurious Lifestyle and Favoritism toward Close Relatives

During his reign, ʿUthmān's actions sparked protests among Muslims and senior companions of the Prophet (s). In contrast to the practices of his predecessors, ʿUthmān embraced a more luxurious lifestyle and, in certain instances, utilized public funds for the benefit of his own family. Upon assuming the position of caliph, ʿUthmān constructed an opulent residence using the finest materials. Additionally, he established an expansive garden within his house, diverting waterways to enhance its beauty. Subsequently, this lavishness was emulated by his appointed rulers as well.[3] Uthmān would sit at lavishly adorned banquets to eat.[4] There is an account that highlights the extravagant appearance of the third caliph, ʿUthmān, where it is mentioned that he wore golden dental covers.[5]

ʿUthmān spent a significant portion of public funds for his personal lands and residences. He also distributed the spoils obtained from certain conquests among his wives and daughters.[6] There is an account that during ʿUthmān's caliphate, a precious jewel known as Khusraw's jewel, which had been seized as spoils from Iran during the

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 165.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 522.
3. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 322.
4. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 401.
5. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 1: 552-53.
6. Ḥalabī, *al-Sīra al-Ḥalabiyya*, 2: 108.

era of ʿUmar, was taken out of the treasury. It was then bestowed upon the caliph's daughter for personal adornment.[1]

Furthermore, what ignited public anger among the people and the Prophet's companions towards ʿUthmān was his close association with Banū Umayya, who were his relatives. He granted them financial support, positions of power, and extensive land holdings. Al-Dhahabī writes: "The act of bestowing wealth upon close relatives and granting them influential positions and territories, along with amassing a significant amount of wealth to the extent of owning 1,000 male and female servants, fueled animosity towards the caliph."[2]

ʿUthmān arranged a marriage between his daughter and Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, who was his cousin (son of his paternal uncle). As part of this arrangement, he allocated one-fifth of the spoils acquired from the conquest of Africa, totaling 100,000 dirhams, to Marwān. These funds were supposed to be deposited in the treasury.[3] In addition, ʿUthmān bestowed the Fadak property to Marwān as a gift.[4] Al-Ḥārith b. al-Ḥakam, who was Marwān's brother and a cousin of ʿUthmān, also received gifts from the caliph. One such gift was the Mahrūz region in Medina, which had been allocated by the Prophet (s) to the Muslims. However, ʿUthmān gifted this region to al-Ḥārith.[5] Furthermore, the caliph bestowed zakat or charity camels upon him.[6] The caliph had another son-in-law named ʿAbd Allāh b. Khālid, who was also the recipient of gifts from ʿUthmān. Upon ʿUthmān's order, he was granted 400,000 dirhams from the treasury of Basra.[7] According to reports, ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Arqam, one of the Prophet's companions, held the position of overseeing the treasury. When ʿUthmān issued a payment order for his son-in-law, ʿAbd Allāh b. Khālid, amounting to 300,000 dirhams to be disbursed from the treasury, Ibn al-Arqam, as the head of the treasury, refused to release the funds. In a sign of protest, he resigned from his position.[8]

Additionally, ʿUthmān granted a gift of 100,000 dirhams to Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ, who belonged to the Umayyad tribe. This action sparked protests among prominent companions of the Prophet (s), including ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām,

1. Zubayr b. Bakkār, *Akhbār al-muwaffaqiyyāt*, 613.
2. Dhahabī, *Duwal al-Islām*, 1: 23.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansab al-ashrāf*, 5: 514; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 166.
4. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, 195.
5. Ibid., 195.
6. Balādhurī, *Ansab al-ashrāf*, 5: 515.
7. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 168.
8. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 548.

and Ṭalḥa. In response to the protests, ʿUthmān defended his decision by stating, "He [i.e., Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ] is my close relative."[1] Furthermore, ʿUthmān extended his generosity to his pre-Islamic acquaintances as well. Rabīʿa b. al-Ḥārith, who was a business partner of ʿUthmān during the pre-Islamic (*jāhiliyya*) era, received a gift of 100,000 dirhams along with several houses from ʿUthmān.[2]

Furthermore, during his r, ʿUthmān allowed the return of individuals whom the Prophet (s) had previously expelled from Medina, including his own paternal uncle, al-Ḥakam b. Abī l-ʿĀṣ. Al-Ḥakam had initially come to Medina after the Conquest of Mecca, but his behavior took a disrespectful turn as he began to mock the Prophet (s) and engage in offensive acts. Consequently, the Prophet (s) expelled him from Medina and sent him to Taif. Despite ʿUthmān's persistent efforts during the caliphates of both Abū Bakr and ʿUmar to convince them to allow the return of al-Ḥakam, they adhered to the Prophet's decision and refused to allow the return of those he had expelled. However, during his own reign, ʿUthmān chose to reverse this policy and permitted the return of such individuals, including his uncle.[3]

ʿUthmān's Treatment of His Critics

Despite facing mounting protests and widespread public criticism of his governance, ʿUthmān ascended the *minbar* (pulpit) in the mosque of Medina and defiantly proclaimed, "I will obtain any amount of *al-fay'*[4] that I consider necessary, even if some people are displeased." In response, ʿAlī (a) voiced his opposition and warned, "As a consequence of this, you will be deprived of it, and will be prevented."[5] Among those who strongly objected to ʿUthmān's remarks was ʿAmmār b. Yāsir. In response to his protest, the caliph ordered his arrest, and he was subjected to severe beatings that rendered him unconscious. While in an unconscious state, he was taken to the house of Umm Salama. Some individuals who had an alliance covenant with ʿAmmār expressed their objections to the actions of the caliph. Umm Salama and ʿĀ'isha also voiced their disapproval. In an act of defiance, ʿĀ'isha presented some of the personal belongings of the Prophet (s) and remarked, "These possessions have not yet perished, but you have so quickly abandoned

1. Ibid., 5: 515.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 404.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 513-14; see also Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 164.
4. The spoils gained in a peaceful manner.
5. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 538. This was a sarcasm saying that this will cause people to rebel against you and remove you from the post of caliphate.

the traditions of the Prophet (s)." This further enraged ʿUthmān, leading to increased public criticism of him and condemnation of his treatment of ʿAmmār b. Yāsir.[1]

During a congregational prayer led by ʿUthmān, ʿĀ'isha and Ḥafṣa, two wives of the Prophet (s), strongly voiced their objections against ʿUthmān, criticizing his departure from the traditions of the Prophet (s). After the prayer, ʿUthmān said, "People! These two women instigated sedition during the prayer. I warn you [two women] that if you continue such actions, I would publicly slander and curse you, as I know your backgrounds." Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ objected to ʿUthmān's remarks and left the mosque. When ʿUthmān also left the mosque to go after him, he encountered ʿAlī (a). Curiously, ʿAlī (a) asked him, "Where are you going?" In response, ʿUthmān cursed Saʿd and declared his intention to go after him. ʿAlī (a) then implored him, saying, "O man, cease such actions." Enraged, ʿUthmān retorted, "Are you not the one who failed to accompany the Prophet (s) during the Battle of Tabuk?" To which ʿAlī (a) countered, "Are you not the one who fled from the battlefield on the day of Uḥud?"[2]

When a man from the ʿUzza tribe delivered Kaʿb b. ʿUbayda's critical letter to ʿUthmān, the caliph was displeased with its contents. In response, he ordered the ruler of Kufa to send Kaʿb to Medina. Upon Kaʿb's arrival, ʿUthmān subjected him to humiliation, stating, "Do you call me to what is right, while I was reciting the Quran when you were still in the loins of your polytheistic father?" Kaʿb, however, countered by reminding ʿUthmān that his position as caliph was obtained through the council's vote, predicated on the condition that he would adhere to the Prophet's tradition. Kaʿb further asserted, "if the people were consulted at this moment, they would remove you from the caliphate." Enraged by Kaʿb's words, ʿUthmān ordered that Kaʿb's garment be removed, and he was subjected to twenty lashes. Subsequently, ʿUthmān commanded Kaʿb's exile to Iran.[3]

ʿUthmān's Policy of Exiling His Opponents

Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī, an esteemed companion of the Prophet (s), grew weary of ʿUthmān's actions. On one occasion, he delivered a sermon in the mosque where he openly voiced his objections to ʿUthmān's leadership. During this sermon, Abū Dhar expressed his deep regret that ʿAlī (a) was not chosen as the caliph. He declared, "I swear by God that if you had given precedence to the one whom God had given precedence to, and left behind

1. Ibid., 5: 538.
2. Maʿmar b. Rāshid, *Jāmiʿ*, 11: 355-56.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 531.

the one whom God had left behind, and if you had entrusted the guardianship and inheritance [i.e., caliphate] to the Prophet's Household, you would have been blessed by divine favors." Abū Dhar's speech included strong criticism of ʿUthmān's actions and the decisions made by previous caliphs. He argued that the prevailing injustices within the Muslim community were the result of sidelining ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) from assuming the caliphate.[1]

Upon discovering that Abū Dhar had been openly criticizing him by invoking the Prophet's traditions, ʿUthmān decided to exile him to the Levant. Muʿāwiya as the ruler of the Levant wrote a letter to ʿUthmān, expressing his concerns that Abū Dhar continued to spread slander about the caliph in the Levant, causing doubt among the people and undermining the caliph's authority. Muʿāwiya requested that ʿUthmān bring Abū Dhar back to Medina. In response, ʿUthmān ordered that Abū Dhar be returned to Medina in a harsh manner, riding on a mount without a saddle. When Abū Dhar arrived in Medina, with his legs bloodstained due to the rugged journey, ʿUthmān summoned him. ʿUthmān confronted Abū Dhar, saying, "I have been informed that you claim to have heard the Prophet (s) say, 'When the number of Banū Umayya reaches 30 men, they will rule over God's territories as if they were their personal property, treating God's servants as their own and manipulating the religion of God'." Abū Dhar confirmed that he had indeed made such a statement. ʿUthmān then sent for ʿAlī (a) and asked him, "O Abā al-Ḥasan! Have you heard the Prophet (s) say what Abū Dhar is narrating?" ʿAlī (a) affirmed the statement, recalling an utterance by the Prophet (s) that vouched for Abū Dhar's truthfulness. As a consequence, ʿUthmān decided to exile Abū Dhar to the region of al-Rabadha.[2] ʿUthmān gave explicit instructions to Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, saying, "Expel Abū Dhar and do not allow anyone to speak with him." Upon hearing this, ʿAlī (a), accompanied by Imam al-Ḥasan, Imam al-Ḥusayn, ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib, and ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, went out to bid farewell to Abū Dhar. As Abū Dhar saw ʿAlī (a), he approached him and kissed his hands. Overwhelmed with emotion, he cried and said, "Whenever I see you and your sons, I am reminded of the Prophet's words, and I cannot help but shed tears." When ʿAlī (a) attempted to address Abū Dhar, Marwān intervened, saying, "The Commander of the Faithful [i.e., ʿUthmān] has ordered that no one should speak to him." In response, ʿAlī (a) raised his whip and struck Marwān's camel, asserting, "Go away! May God cast you into the Hellfire!" He then bid farewell to Abū Dhar and

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 171.

2. Al-Rabadha was a region located approximately three days' journey (about 120 km) away from Medina (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 3: 24).

engaged in conversation with him. Marwān returned to ʿUthmān and reported ʿAlī's compassionate treatment of Abū Dhar, which ultimately sparked a subsequent dispute between ʿAlī (a) and ʿUthmān.[1]

ʿAlī (a) also intervened to prevent the exile of ʿAmmār b. Yāsir. When news of Abū Dhar's passing reached ʿUthmān, he expressed, "May God bless Abū Dhar." In response, ʿAmmār sarcastically remarked, "Yes, indeed! May God truly bless him." This sarcastic comment offended ʿUthmān. Later, another incident involving ʿAmmār came to the caliph's attention, and he made the decision to exile ʿAmmār. The Banū Makhzūm clan, ʿAmmar's allies, approached ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) and sought his assistance. ʿAlī (a) affirmed, "I will not allow ʿUthmān to carry out this exile." Consequently, ʿAmmār remained in his own house. When ʿUthmān became aware of the plea from the Banū Makhzūm, he reconsidered his decision regarding ʿAmmār's exile.[2]

According to historical accounts, it appears that during his r, ʿUthmān implemented a consistent policy of exiling his opponents, extending beyond the incidents involving ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd and Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī. One such example is that of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥanbal al-Jumaḥī, who composed a poem criticizing ʿUthmān. As a result, the caliph chose to exile him to Khaybar.[3] On one occasion, ʿAmmār b. Yāsir was able to return to Medina after ʿAlī (a) interceded on his behalf.[4] On another occasion, ʿĀmir b. ʿAbd al-Qays,[5] who was critical of ʿUthmān's policies, was exiled to the Levant by ʿUthmān's command.[6]

Several prominent figures in Kufa, including Mālik al-Ashtar, Thābit b. Qays, Kumayl b. Ziyād, and Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣūḥān, voiced their objections against ʿUthmān's policies. The ruler of Kufa wrote a letter to ʿUthmān, informing him that some influential individuals in Kufa had spoken unfavorably about the caliph. In response, ʿUthmān issued a command to exile them to the Levant.[7] Even in the Levant, these individuals did not hesitate to continue expressing their opposition against ʿUthmān. Muʿāwiya, the

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 171-73; see also Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 340-42.
2. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 173.
3. Ibid., 2: 173.
4. ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, 4: 252.
5. He was a companion of the Prophet, renowned for his worship and asceticism (Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 3: 28).
6. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, 195. On another occasion, however, ʿUthmān issued an order for the ruler of Basra to send ʿĀmir to Medina (Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 547). Furthermore, according to an account, those who protested against ʿUthmān's policies sent ʿĀmir to him in order to dissuade him from continuing those policies. ʿĀmir approached ʿUthmān and advised him to repent from his actions and relinquish his position as caliph, but he received an inappropriate response from ʿUthmān (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 323).
7. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 323.

governor of the Levant, wrote to the caliph, informing him that these individuals were still actively protesting. He expressed his concern that their actions could undermine his authority as the ruler of the region. In response, ʿUthmān ordered their exile to Homs.[1]

ʿĀ'isha's Pivotal Role in Opposig ʿUthmān

ʿĀ'isha, the wife of the Prophet (s), played a significant role in the opposition against ʿUthmān. In the early stages of ʿUthmān's caliphate, a dispute arose between them due to a reduction in the share of the treasury allocated to ʿĀ'isha compared to what she had received during the era of ʿUmar.[2] As mentioned earlier, ʿĀ'isha openly expressed her objections, which elicited reactions from ʿUthmān. In certain accounts, it is reported that ʿĀ'isha was the first person to bestow the title *al-naʿthal* (meaning a foolish old man) upon ʿUthmān.[3] It is recorded in some accounts that along with certain companions of the Prophet (s), ʿĀ'isha cursed the caliph, saying: "Kill the foolish old man (*naʿthal*)! May God's curse be upon the foolish old man (*naʿthal*)!"[4] Additionally, it is reported that ʿĀ'isha often engaged in slander against ʿUthmān[5] and actively encouraged people to rebel and incite riots against him.[6]

Intensified Protests and the Siege of ʿUthmān

In those circumstances, it is possible that the companions of the Prophet (s) who remained in Medina wrote letters to the people of other Islamic cities: "O people! You have left Medina to engage in jihad and spread the religion of Muḥammad (s). But in your absence, the religion of Muḥammad (s) has become corrupted and forsaken. Therefore, return to us and establish the religion."[7] Furthermore, they sent a letter to the inhabitants of Egypt with the following message:

> "In the name of God, the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful. From the early Muhājirūn and the survivors of the people of the council to the companions and companions' companions of the Messenger of God in Egypt: we implore all of you to return to us. We swear by God that each one of you, the companions of the Prophet (s), who reads this letter, should come back to us and reclaim our rights. If you have faith in God and the Day of Resurrection, come to us and establish

1. Balāthurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 532.
2. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 175.
3. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 6: 215; see also Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 72.
4. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 20: 17; see also Irbilī, *Kashf al-ghumma*, 1: 238, 479.
5. Balāthurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 557
6. Ibid., 5: 583.
7. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 367.

> justice based on the foundation established by the Prophet (s). Your caliph has distanced himself from you. The caliphate that followed the Prophet (s) was a caliphate of mercy, but now it has turned into a caliphate of injustice. It devours whatever it seizes."

This letter held such influence that it successfully drew the people of Egypt to Medina.[1]

In the initial stages of the people's protests, ʿUthmān requested ʿAlī (a) to travel to his lands in Yanbuʿ.[2] However, after some time, ʿUthmān sent a message to ʿAlī (a), requesting his return to Medina. As the protests intensified once more, ʿUthmān approached ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, asking him to once again urge ʿAlī (a) to go to Yanbuʿ, as he believed the protestors were supporters of ʿAlī (a). Upon receiving ʿUthmān's letter, ʿAlī (a) expressed his grievances to Ibn ʿAbbās about ʿUthmān's treatment and said: "He insisted that I leave, then sent for me to return, and now he has again sent you with instructions for me to leave! By God, I have defended him until I feared I was sinning."[3] As the protests against ʿUthmān intensified and the caliph became aware that the opposition, particularly from Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, was growing in the absence of ʿAlī (a), he sent a message urging ʿAlī (a) to return.[4]

ʿĀ'isha's Departure from Medina to Perform the Hajj Pilgrimage

As mentioned earlier, ʿĀ'isha, a prominent dissenter against ʿUthmān, played a significant role in fomenting opposition against the caliph. During the siege of ʿUthmān by his opponents, ʿĀ'isha departed from Medina to perform the Hajj pilgrimage. Upon learning of her decision, ʿUthmān sent a message to her through Marwān b. al-Ḥakam. Marwān approached ʿĀ'isha and conveyed the caliph's greetings, urging her to persuade the people to disperse and end the siege. He also made promises to ʿĀ'isha. However, she ignored Marwān's pleas and continued her journey. In response, Marwān composed poems with the following content: "Qays set the city on fire, and when the fire blazed, he quickly departed." Upon hearing this poem, while holding a saddle in her hand, ʿĀ'isha said, "By God, I wish that the one who sent you [i.e., ʿUthmān] was inside this saddle, so that I could close it and threw it into the sea."[5] While on her journey, ʿĀ'isha came across ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, who had been appointed by ʿUthmān as the commander of the

1. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 53-54.
2. An area located along the shores of the Red Sea, approximately 7 stations away from Medina (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 5: 450).
3. Sharīf ak-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 240.
4. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 52-53.
5. Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 4: 1172; see also Balāthurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 565; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 175-76.

Hajj.[1] ʿĀ'isha cautioned him, saying, "Be cautious not to disperse the people who have gathered around this rebellious person [i.e., ʿUthmān]."[2] According to another account, ʿĀ'isha further commented, saying, "Ṭalḥa has assumed control over the treasury. If he were to become the caliph, he would follow the tradition of his cousin, Abū Bakr." In response, Ibn ʿAbbās stated, "If something were to happen to ʿUthmān, people would turn to none other than our ally [i.e., ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a)]." Upon hearing this, ʿĀ'isha replied, "Enough! I do not wish to engage in a debate with you."[3]

Imam ʿAlī's Attempts to Reform ʿUthmān

In 34/654-55, as ʿUthmān's actions began to displease many of the Prophet's companions, a group of them gathered outside ʿAlī's house to discuss their concerns regarding ʿUthmān. They sought the Imam's counsel and urged him to find a solution to the people's problems. Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a) approached ʿUthmān, offering advice and warning him about the divine wrath. He also reproached ʿUthmān for his governance failures, his leniency towards rulers and his relatives.[4]

In that same year, ʿUthmān called upon his governors and sought their advice and counsel.[5] During that meeting, where ʿAlī (a) and Ṭalḥa were also present, Muʿāwiya proposed a course of action. He suggested that they be allowed to return to their respective positions as governors, and then undergo an audit based on their possessions. Additionally, he recommended that ʿUthmān accompany him to the Levant, but this suggestion was rejected by ʿUthmān. Muʿāwiya also proposed that an army from the Levant be deployed to defend the caliph and suppress the protesters if necessary, but this suggestion was also turned down by ʿUthmān. In the meeting, ʿAlī (a) invited ʿUthmān to repent to God and adhere to piety, while Ṭalḥa criticized ʿUthmān for introducing unprecedented heresies. In response, ʿUthmān stated, "I did not initiate any heresies. It is you who are inciting people against me based on your suspicions."[6]

Subsequently, Muʿāwiya advised Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf, ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, and ʿAlī (a) to treat ʿUthmān with kindness. He emphasized, "If he is killed among you, I will fill Medina with warriors." Among a group

1. During the post-Prophet period, it was customary that when the caliph himself did not undertake the hajj pilgrimage, he would appoint someone else as the commander of the hajj pilgrimage.
2. Balāthurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 565.
3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 407.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 549-50; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 337-38; Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 164.
5. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 333.
6. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 533.

of Muhājirūn, Muʿāwiya warned them against inciting rebellion against ʿUthmān. He even suggested to ʿUthmān that he should execute ʿAlī (a), Ṭalḥa, and al-Zubayr in order to quell the unrest, but ʿUthmān rejected this proposal.[1]

As the protests against ʿUthmān escalated, a faction of people rose up against him. In an effort to address their demands and bring about a resolution, the caliph approached ʿAlī (a) and requested his assistance in implementing their requests. Consequently, ʿAlī (a) engaged in a dialogue with the protesters at a location called Dhū Khashab,[2] and as a result, they eventually dispersed.[3] In an effort to address the concerns of the people, ʿAlī (a) proposed that ʿUthmān make a pledge to change his treatment of the people of Egypt and provide them with a written guarantee to demonstrate his goodwill. ʿUthmān accepted this suggestion, and upon the recommendation of the people, he appointed ʿAlī (a) as the overseer of this guarantee.[4] Furthermore, the protesters also requested that ʿUthmān appoint Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr as the ruler of Egypt instead of ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Sarḥ, and ʿUthmān agreed to this request.[5]

Upon the suggestion of ʿAlī (a), ʿUthmān delivered a speech in which he promised to rectify his mistakes. However, due to his interactions with the people, Marwān b. al-Ḥakam influenced ʿUthmān to change his stance. When ʿAlī (a) learned of this, he addressed the people, seeking their help, saying, "O servants of God! O Muslims! Assist me! If I remain silent, ʿUthmān will claim that you have neglected my right of kinship. If I speak up and he takes the right course, Marwān comes and manipulates him." Furthermore, ʿAlī (a) expressed to ʿUthmān, "You have not abandoned Marwān, and he has not abandoned you. He has turned you away from religion and reason. I swear by God, I see him dragging you in all directions like a camel. Therefore, I will no longer come back to you since you have undermined your own dignity and allowed them to dominate you." After ʿAlī (a) left, Nāʾila bt. al-Farāfiṣa, the wife of ʿUthmān, approached him and conveyed that she had heard ʿAlī's words. She warned him that he was being manipulated by Marwān, and if he continued to obey him, it would lead to his own demise. She emphasized that Marwān had no support among the people, and they had turned away from ʿUthmān because of his association with Marwān. Nāʾila advised ʿUthmān to reconcile with ʿAlī (a), as he held a high status among the people. ʿUthmān sent someone

1. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 46-49.
2. A region located one day's journey (about 40 km) away from Medina (Iskandarī, *al-Amkina*, 1: 439).
3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 406; Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 344.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 553, Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 410-11.
5. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 55; Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 411.

to summon ʿAlī (a), but ʿAlī (a) refused to return to the caliph. Eventually, ʿUthmān personally visited ʿAlī's house overnight, engaged in conversation with him, and made promises not to deviate from the right path and to uphold his pledges to ʿAlī (a) and the people. ʿAlī (a) remarked, "You addressed the people in the mosque, but because of Marwān's words, you disregarded your own statements." Upon leaving ʿAlī's house, ʿUthmān expressed his disappointment, saying, "You have left me without a supporter and have emboldened the people against me." In response, ʿAlī (a) said, "I swear by God that I have protected you more than anyone else. However, every time I do something in your favor, Marwān says something different, and you choose to heed his words over mine."[1]

During the same period, while Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr was en route to Egypt to replace ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Sarḥ as the ruler, the people in Egypt obtained a letter instructing to kill Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr and his companions, along with further instructions to suppress the uprising. As a result, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr and his group returned to Medina. They presented the letter to Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, and ʿAlī (a). Some among them suggested to ʿAlī (a) that they should assassinate the caliph, but he rejected the idea. Accompanied by Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, Saʿd, and ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, they confronted ʿUthmān, showing him the servant, the camel, the letter, and the caliph's seal. They questioned why such a letter had been written. ʿUthmān swore by God that he did not write or order the writing of the letter, and he had not even witnessed its composition. However, since nobody believed the caliph's words, the siege around his residence grew tighter. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr suspected that Marwān b. al-Ḥakam was the one who had authored the letter.[2] According to an alternate account, upon discovering the existence of the letter, ʿAlī (a) brought it to ʿUthmān's attention. When ʿUthmān claimed ignorance of the letter, ʿAlī (a) inquired about a possible suspect who could have written it. Surprisingly, ʿUthmān accused ʿAlī (a) himself of being the author of the letter, which deeply offended him. In response, ʿAlī (a) solemnly stated, "I swear by God that I will no longer assist you, nor will I take any action against you. I entrust you to God's judgment."[3] During this period, among those who played prominent roles in the uprisings against ʿUthmān were Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, and ʿĀ'isha.[4]

1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 363-64; see also Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 554.
2. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 55-57; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 175; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 3: 168-69.
3. Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 4: 1154-55.
4. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 175.

Ṭalḥa as the head of the opposition against ʿUthmān blocked water supply to the caliph's residence.[1] When ʿAlī (a) was confronted with ʿUthmān's request for water, despite his personal dissatisfaction with ʿUthmān, he chose to provide water to his house. Furthermore, he admonished Ṭalḥa for obstructing the water supply to ʿUthmān's residence.[2] According to certain accounts, upon learning of the assailants' plan to assassinate the caliph, ʿAlī (a) dispatched his sons, Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), to safeguard the life of ʿUthmān.[3]

As the crisis intensified, and after consulting with his trusted companions, ʿUthmān reached out to ʿAlī (a), urging him to appease the rioters by offering them some wealth until reinforcements could arrive. In response, ʿAlī (a) advised, "They require your fair treatment more than they desire your demise. Their agitation can only subside if they find satisfaction." Nonetheless, ʿAlī (a) addressed the people and managed to partially pacify them.[4]

Before these events unfolded, ʿUthmān had sent a letter to Muʿāwiya, requesting reinforcements. Muʿāwiya made preparations and assembled an army, but he refrained from allowing them to depart from the Levant. He justified this by stating that he needed to discreetly visit Medina to assess the situation firsthand. When ʿUthmān noticed Muʿāwiya's arrival without an accompanying army, he questioned the reason behind it. In response, Muʿāwiya explained, "I have come to personally seek your opinion on this matter, and if you agree, I will come with my army." ʿUthmān replied, "I swear by God, that is not the case. You desire my demise so that you may claim vengeance for my blood."[5] In a different version, ʿUthmān expressed to Muʿāwiya, "May God not reward you with goodness! It is because of your actions that I will meet my demise."[6]

Upon the revelation of the letter attributed to ʿUthmān intended for the ruler of Egypt, the protests escalated in intensity. Sensing the imminent danger of an assassination attempt on the caliph, ʿAlī (a) swiftly made his way to ʿUthmān's residence. He instructed his sons, Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), to unsheathe their swords and stand guard at the entrance, preventing the protesters from entering. As the siege tightened and the demonstrators demanded the surrender of Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, ʿUthmān ascended to the rooftop of his dwelling and adamantly declared his refusal to

1. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 57.
2. Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 4: 1202; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 57; Balāthurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 561.
3. Balāthurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 558.
4. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 370.
5. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 175.
6. Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 3: 450.

hand over Marwān. In response to the caliph's words, the protesters began hurling arrows, resulting in injuries to even Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and Qanbar, Imam ʿAlī's servant. Among those who had laid siege to the house, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr grew concerned about the wounds suffered by Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and feared that the Banū Hāshim might take action.[1]

On the final Friday prior to his assassination, ʿUthmān was confronted by the protesters who attacked him. He was forcefully pulled down from the minbar, leading to a loss of consciousness. The caliph's companions swiftly carried him back to his residence. Concerned for ʿUthmān's well-being, ʿAlī (a) visited his house, but the companions of the caliph accused him of orchestrating the unfolding events. They collectively asserted, "You are responsible for this. We swear by God, if you achieve your objectives, the world will turn against you." Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), who had earnestly supported ʿUthmān throughout, felt offended by these accusations and subsequently returned to his own house.[2]

During the siege on ʿUthmān, ʿAlī (a) approached Ṭalḥa and earnestly appealed, "I beseech you, for the sake of God, to disperse the crowd from around ʿUthmān." Ṭalḥa responded, "I swear by God, I will not do so until the Banū Umayya restore what is rightfully due."[3] Finally, a group of people from Kufa and Egypt launched an attack on ʿUthmān, resulting in the caliph's assassination in Dhū l-Ḥijja 35/May-June 656.[4] According to one account, Ṭalḥa conveyed to ʿAlī (a), "If ʿUthmān were to hand over Marwān, he would be spared from death." ʿAlī (a) responded, "If he surrendered Marwān, you would execute him [i.e., Marwān] without conducting a trial."[5]

In certain historical accounts, it is mentioned that ʿUthmān's corpse remained at the garbage collection place (*kunāsa*) for a period of three days.[6] Jubayr b. Muṭʿim and Ḥakīm b. Ḥizām approached ʿAlī (a) and requested him to arrange for the burial of the caliph's body. Upon learning that certain individuals planned to stone ʿUthmān's body, ʿAlī (a) intervened to prevent such an act and issued the order for the burial of the deceased caliph's corpse.[7] A group of individuals hindered the burial of ʿUthmān's body in the al-Baqīʿ Cemetery. In order to avert further unrest and potential conflict, the bearers of

1. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 59-62.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 364-65.
3. Ibid., 4: 405.
4. See Rayshahrī, *Mawsūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib* (*a*), 3: 264-67.
5. Ibn Qutayaba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 63-64.
6. Abū Nuʿaym, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, 1: 87; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 39: 532.
7. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 3: 180.

ʿUthmān's body transported it to a location known as *Ḥashshu Kawkab*, situated at the outskirts of al-Baqīʿ, and buried it there during the night.[1]

Based on a collection of historical reports, it can be stated that the origin of the accusation that Imam ʿAlī (a) was involved in the murder of ʿUthmān was Muʿāwiya's policies in Levant. According to some reports, Ḥassān b. Thābit composed poems in elegy for ʿUthmān, and the people of Levant added a verse to it that indicated Imam ʿAlī's involvement in ʿUthmān's murder.[2] In a sermon, Imam ʿAlī (a) also identified the Umayyads as the source of these accusations.[3] As will be discussed later, this accusation was used by the Imam's opponents throughout his rule. In response, whenever the opportunity arose, the Imam (a) publicly announced that he had no role in ʿUthmān's murder. Commander of the Faithful (a) always said: "By God, I neither killed ʿUthmān, nor did I order it, nor did I participate in it, nor was I pleased with it."[4] Regarding the defense of ʿUthmān, ʿAlī (a) said to ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās: "By God, I have defended him until I feared I was sinning."[5]

Despite ʿAlī's belief that the caliphate was rightfully his, he did not endorse or express agreement with the protesters who besieged ʿUthmān. Throughout the turmoil, ʿAlī (a) consistently offered advice and guidance to ʿUthmān in an attempt to pacify the situation. However, ʿUthmān and his advocates frequently accused ʿAlī (a) of supporting the protesters. Although ʿAlī (a) acknowledged the legitimacy of people's grievances through his advice to ʿUthmān, his concerns over the potential spread of unrest and threats to the Islamic community and religion prevented him from approving of ʿUthmān's assassination.

1. Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 1: 112.
2. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 3: 189.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 75.
4. Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 4: 1264.
5. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 240.

From Governance to Martyrdom

Immediately following the assassination of ʿUthmān, there was a fervent rush among the people to pledge their allegiance to ʿAlī (a). The Imam describes the enthusiasm of the crowd gathering around him as follows: "Then suddenly, people were flocking to me ... trampling Ḥasan and Ḥusayn and rending my own shirt, pressing in on me from every side."[1]

Pledge of Allegiance to Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a)

Among the earliest individuals who pledged their loyalty to Imam ʿAlī (a) were Ṭalḥa b. ʿUbayd Allāh and al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām. They made a commitment to persuade the Muhājirūn to pledge their allegiance to Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a). Mālik al-Ashtar had also made a promise to secure the allegiance of the people of Kufa, while Abū l-Haytham b. al-Tayyihān and Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī had guaranteed the support of the Anṣār and the remaining members of the Quraysh.[2] According to certain narratives, Ṭalḥa was believed to be the first individual to pledge his allegiance to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a).[3] The first pledge of allegiance to ʿAlī (a) took place on Friday, Dhū l-Ḥijja 18, 35/June 17, 656.[4]

Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), at that time, did not initially seek the position of caliphate. When people approached him and expressed their desire to pledge their allegiance to him, he responded by saying: "Leave me and seek another! We are looking at a thing with many faces and shades, in which hearts will not remain steady or minds stable, for the

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 2.
2. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 178.
3. Balāthurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 205.
4. Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 22.

skies are overcast and the road is obscure. Know this: If I accept your pledge, I shall drive you on the path I know to be right, without caring about your chiding or rebuke. If you leave me be, however, I will be as one of you."[1] Despite ʿAlī's words, the people were not deterred from pledging their allegiance to him. They eagerly approached the Imam, even though he initially concealed his hands. They persisted in their desire to pledge their allegiance until a group of individuals spoke up, saying, "Let us pledge our allegiance to you, as we do not wish to pledge allegiance to anyone else, and we fear discord and strife among the people." Eventually, due to their relentless insistence, the Imam accepted their pledges of allegiance.[2]

Refusal of Some People to Pledge Allegiance to ʿAlī (a)

Certain individuals, such as ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar, Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, and Usāma b. Zayd, chose not to pledge their allegiance to ʿAlī (a) during that time.[3] As indicated in his letters and sermons,[4] Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) never resorted to coercion or force to compel anyone into pledging their allegiance to him. When these individuals declined to pledge their allegiance to ʿAlī (a), ʿAmmār b. Yāsir acknowledged that the pledges had been made willingly and without any coercion. Nevertheless, he suggested to ʿAlī (a) that he should extend an invitation to those who had refused to pledge their allegiance and ask them once again. However, the Imam (a) responded by saying, "We do not require the allegiance of those who are unwilling to [give it to] us."[5] In another relevant narrative, when Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) was advised to imprison those who refused to pledge their allegiance or made excuses to evade it, he responded by saying, "I will leave them be with their opinion [regarding the pledge of allegiance to me]."[6]

While historical sources often mention the "evasion of pledging allegiance," a closer examination of these accounts reveals that the prominent figures in question actually refused to accompany Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī (a) in battles, specifically the Battle of Jamal. Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405/1015) writes, "Those who believe that ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar ... [and others] refused to pledge their allegiance to ʿAlī are those who deny the historical facts of that period."[7] This is supported by the dialogues that Amīr al-Muʾminīn

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 92.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 206.
3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 431; see also Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 3: 191-2.
4. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 1; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 458.
5. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 441.
6. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 143.
7. Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 124.

(a) had with those individuals, as well as other pieces of evidence from that historical period.

In response to Imam ʿAlī's remarks regarding the pledge of allegiance, Usāma b. Zayd expressed, "You are the dearest of all people to me, … but I have made a promise to God that I will not fight against those who profess the statement 'there is no deity but Allah'."[1] The story of Usāma's promise unfolded as follows: In 7/628-29, during an expedition, Usāma b. Zayd encountered an individual who had professed the Two Testimonies (*Shahādatayn*) before being killed by Usāma. When the Prophet (s) learned about this incident, he reproached Usāma and paid the blood money to the family of the deceased. As a result, Usāma made a solemn oath before God that he would never draw his sword against someone who professed the Two Testimonies. Consequently, during the Battle of Jamal, Usāma did not agree to accompany ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a).[2]

In a similar vein, Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ said to ʿAlī (a), "Provide me with a sword that can distinguish between Muslims and non-believers, so that I may fight alongside you."[3] Similarly, Muḥammad b. Maslama expressed to ʿAlī (a), "The Messenger of God instructed me to wield my sword in battle until it clashes with the polytheists. He advised me to strike my sword against a stone and break it if I encounter those who perform prayers [i.e., Muslims]. I broke my sword yesterday."[4] Another person approached Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) and conveyed the following words, "[The Prophet (s)] instructed me to break my sword in the face of sedition and to replace it with a wooden sword, while remaining at home."[5] In another encounter, during a dialogue with ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar, Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, and Muḥammad b. Maslama, ʿAlī (a) addressed them by saying, "While you deliberated for three days and nights regarding pledging allegiance to me and came to realize that my position is not inferior to that of the previous caliphs, why do you hesitate to fight alongside me? Let me know, do you intend to revoke your pledge of allegiance to me?" They responded, saying, "By God, we have no intention to do so, but we are reluctant to engage in combat alongside you against those who perform prayers [i.e., Muslims]."[6]

All of these dialogues revolve around the mention of seditions and fights against Muslims. Similarly, Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī declined to send reinforcements and gather

1. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 208.
2. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 724-25; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 474-75.
3. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 143; see also Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 20: 287.
4. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 143; see also Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 127.
5. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 207.
6. Iskāfī, *al-Miʿyār wa l-muwāzina*, 106.

forces for the fight against the People of Camel (*Jamal*) due to the same concern.[1] Certain reports describe these individuals as having successfully navigated the challenges (*fitna*) posed by the sedition at the time.[2] Moreover, the sources report that these people refused to engage in war, without mentioning their refusal to pledge allegiance.[3] Further, certain sources label them as early Muʿtazilas (meaning those who isolated themselves) due to their refusal to partake in wars.[4] Based on these instances, it can be inferred that these individuals, or at least the majority of them, primarily declined to participate in wars rather than refusing to pledge their allegiance to ʿAlī (a).[5]

Restoring Calm in Medina

In one of his initial actions, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) had plans to apprehend certain members of the Banū Umayya, including Marwān b. al-Ḥakam. However, they had already departed from Medina. Subsequently, Imam ʿAlī (a) approached ʿUthmān's wife, seeking her account of the individuals responsible for the murder of ʿUthmān. She responded by saying, "People entered the house whose names I am unaware of, but I recognized their faces. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr was among them." Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) summoned Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr and questioned him regarding the remarks made by ʿUthmān's wife. In response, Muḥammad declared, "I solemnly swear by God that she is correct. I entered the house, but when ʿUthmān implored me in the name of my father, I left him. I have sincerely repented to God [for this action]. I swear by God that I did not kill him." ʿUthmān's wife confirmed the truth of his statement.[6]

In the first sermon that Imam ʿAlī (a) delivered after people pledged their allegiance to him, he began by praising God and then spoke as follows:

> "God has revealed a book to guide you and explained in it the difference between good and evil. Follow the path of good and you shall be rightly guided. Shun the path of evil and you shall you remain on the high road. The mandated rites must be performed; offer them to God, and they will take you to paradise. God has made certain things illicit, and these are known. He has placed the sanctity of Muslims above all sanctities; through their devotion and declaration of his oneness, he has bound them, and their rights, together. A Muslim is someone from whose tongue

1. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 359.
2. Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 1: 77.
3. ʿĀmirī, *Ghirbāl*, 37; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shatharāt al-dhahab*, 1: 213.
4. Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shīʿa*, 5; Nāshī Akbar, *Masāʾil al-Imāma*, 179; Ashʿarī al-Qummī, *al-Maqālāt wa al-firaq*, 4; Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa l-niḥal*, 1: 161.
5. See Yūsufī Gharawī, *Masūʾat al-Tārīkh al-Islāmī*, 4: 436-39.
6. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 66.

> and hand all other Muslims are safe, except when it is lawfully required to punish; it is unlawful to injure a Muslim, except with just cause. People, hasten to accept death! Death is common to all, yet particular to each individual. Generations have preceded you, and the dreaded hour now drives you forward. Lighten your burden of sin, so that you may be quick to catch up—those who have gone ahead await the arrival of those who are yet to come. Fear God, and do not injure his servants or his lands. You are answerable for your actions, even those relating to the earth and to cattle. Obey God and do not sin. If you see an opportunity to do good, take it. If you see a chance to do evil, shun it."[1]

At the conclusion of the sermon, certain individuals, including Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, and some of the Prophet's companions, expressed their desire for the arrest and retributive execution of those responsible for the murder of ʿUthmān. In response, ʿAlī (a) addressed them, saying, "O brothers! I am well aware of what you know. However, what can I do to those over whom we have no control? They are the ones who have garnered support from your subjects, and the Bedouins remain steadfast in their alliance with them. They are among you, causing harm as they please. Can you perceive any power or means to achieve what you desire?" Everyone responded, "No." The Imam (a) then solemnly declared, "I swear by God that I share your sentiments ... Let us wait until the people regain composure, hearts find tranquility, and rights are reclaimed."[2]

Imam ʿAlī's words indicate his belief that the critical situation in Medina posed obstacles to carrying out retributive justice against the murderers of ʿUthmān. During that period, individuals from various regions who had come to Medina with the intention of removing ʿUthmān from the caliphate were still present. These individuals held the belief that their actions were justified. Additionally, Amīr al-Muʾminīn's government had not yet fully consolidated, and he lacked sufficient military power to confront those who had participated in the uprising. There was a constant fear that if vengeance against ʿUthmān's murderers was pursued, it could potentially spark further unrest and riots among those who had previously rebelled against the former caliph.

On the second day following the pledges of allegiance to him, Imam ʿAlī (a) issued a command for the individuals and Bedouins who had arrived in Medina to depart from the city. Furthermore, he instructed the servants to return to their respective owners and masters and to obey them. After giving these orders, he addressed those who were seeking vengeance for the blood of ʿUthmān, saying, "Now, apprehend and execute the

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 167.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 437; see also Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 168.

murderers of ʿUthmān." They responded, "The identities of the murderers are unclear to the avengers." The Imam replied, "I solemnly swear by God that they will become even more elusive from this day onward."[1]

The Beginning of Reforms

Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) implemented measures to address the prevalent heresies, particularly those that had emerged during the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. One such heresy was the establishment of a bureau of gifts known as the *dīwān al-ʿaṭāyā*, through which public funds were distributed based on people's social classes, while during the time of the Prophet (s) and even under the caliphate of Abū Bakr, public funds were distributed equally among all individuals, regardless of their social status.[2] Another heresy, which did not exist prior to ʿUmar's time, was the practice of performing *al-Tarāwīḥ* prayers. These are the recommended or *nāfila* prayers performed in congregation during the nights of the Ramadan month. ʿUmar introduced and institutionalized this practice during his caliphate, and he famously remarked, "What an excellent innovation this is!"[3] During the time of the Prophet (s), temporary marriage, known as *al-mutʿa*, and *mutʿat al-Ḥajj*[4] were practiced. However, ʿUmar declared these practices forbidden. He explicitly stated, "There were two types of *mutʿa* during the time of the Messenger of God, which I now prohibit and establish punishments for. Marriage to women should be permanent, and if anyone engages in temporary marriage, I will impose the punishment of stoning. Additionally, perform the Hajj and Umrah together."[5]

There were so many heresies during that time that Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) stated: "If my feet had gained a foothold on this slippery path, I would have changed many things."[6] Furthermore, in a sermon, the Imam addressed the prevalence of heresies introduced by the previous caliphs, highlighting their deviations from the Prophet's teachings. He stated, "The rulers before me engaged in actions that contradicted the practices of the Prophet (s), intentionally opposing him and violating his traditions. If I were to compel people to abandon these heresies and restore what has been distorted, my [people,

1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 438; Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, 1: 460-61.
2. ʿAskarī, *al-Awāʾil*, 164-66.
3. Mālik b. Anas, *Muwaṭṭaʾ*, 114.
4. *Mutʿat al-Ḥajj* refers to the period between completing the Umrah (the lesser pilgrimage) and undertaking the obligatory Hajj (the greater pilgrimage), during which the individual who has performed the Umrah is allowed to engage in activities that are otherwise prohibited during the state of *iḥram*.
5. Ibn Abī ʿUrūba, *al-Manāsik*, 83; see also Shāfiʿī, *Musnad*, 3: 52; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2: 885.
6. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 272.

including] soldiers would abandon me. I would be left alone with those who have recognized my virtue and imamate through the Quran and the Prophetic tradition." In this sermon, ʿAlī (a) made allusions to the distortions and heresies that had infiltrated the divine rulings. He expressed that if he were to reinstate the rulings to align with the practices of the Prophet's era, people would reject him. He then recounted an instance where he attempted to eradicate such heresies but faced opposition from people. He recalled, "I solemnly swear by God that I commanded people to strictly observe only the obligatory prayers in congregation during the month of Ramadan [discontinuing the non-obligatory *Tarāwīḥ* prayers]. I explained to them that performing non-obligatory prayers in congregation was heretical. However, some of those who fought alongside me exclaimed, 'O Muslims! ʿUmar's tradition is being altered! ʿAlī is forbidding us from performing recommended prayers [in congregation]'."[1] Likewise, a similar situation arose concerning the equitable distribution of public funds. Certain individuals voiced their dissent to ʿAlī (a) regarding his policy of fair allocation of public resources.

Equitable Distribution of Public Funds

Three days after receiving the people's allegiance, ʿAlī (a) issued a directive to distribute the entirety of the public funds held in the treasury equally among the Muhājirūn and Anṣār, with each individual receiving three dinars.[2] Upon the equitable distribution of funds by ʿUbayd Allāh b. Abī Rafiʿ, who served as ʿAlī's treasurer, certain individuals including Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar, Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ, Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, and several Quraysh members expressed their objection to the equal allocation of public funds. As a result, they abstained from attending and refused to receive their respective shares.[3] Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr approached Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) to voice their objection regarding the distribution of funds, stating, "'Umar did not distribute the funds in this manner." In response, ʿAlī (a) asked, "How did the Messenger of God (s) distribute the funds?" They remained silent. The Imam continued, "Did the Prophet (s) not distribute [the public funds] equitably among all Muslims?" They acknowledged, saying, "Yes." ʿAlī (a) then questioned, "Is it better to follow the tradition of the Prophet (s) or that of ʿUmar?" They replied, "The Prophet's tradition." Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr further asserted, "O Amīr al-Muʾminīn! We have a precedence in Islam. We are the close relatives [of the Prophet (s)] and have labored [in the path of Islam]." In response, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a)

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 58-72.
2. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 437.
3. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 7: 38.

replied, "Is your precedence longer or mine?" They conceded, "Yours." The Imam (a) continued, "Am I a closer relative [to the Prophet (s)] than you?" They affirmed, "Yes." He then asked, "Did I not labor more [in the path of Islam] than you?" Again, they acknowledged, "Yes." Finally, Imam ʿAlī (a) stated, "I swear by God, I hold the same status as the one who works for me and receives a wage."[1]

Amidst the mounting objections to the fair distribution of the public funds, ʿAlī (a) took to the *minbar* (pulpit) and delivered a resolute sermon. He proclaimed, "Regarding these spoils [from the treasury], no one holds priority over another. These belong to God, and you are the Muslim servants of God. This is the book of God, which we acknowledge, testify to [its rightfulness], and submit to [its commands]. The covenant of the Prophet (s) is still with us, so let us abide by it, that God may bestow His mercy upon us. Whoever is dissatisfied [with this distribution] may depart in whatever manner they choose, for there is no fear for those who obey God and follow His divine rulings."[2]

In another relevant account, al-Walīd b. ʿUqba approached ʿAlī (a) and proposed, "Accept our pledge of allegiance on the condition that you do not take away what we have acquired and allow us to retain control over what is presently in our possession." In response, ʿAlī (a) replied, "Regarding refraining from taking away what you have acquired, I cannot disregard God's right. However, concerning [allowing you to keep the wealth] that you currently possess and exempting you from returning it, justice will guide you in distinguishing between what belongs to God and what belongs to the Muslim community [and you should return anything that falls under these categories]. It is my duty to invite you to the Book of God and the tradition of His messenger (s). Whoever finds the truth burdensome will find the falsity even more burdensome."[3]

Although the fair distribution of funds was welcomed by the impoverished, it led to discontent among the upper social classes who had enjoyed larger shares of the funds during the r of previous caliphs. The noblemen of Kufa expressed dissatisfaction with this distribution method and began to lean towards the government in the Levant under the leadership of Muʿāwiya. This shift occurred because ʿAlī (a) did not provide anyone with more than their rightful share, whereas Muʿāwiya granted an additional 2,000 dirhams to individuals belonging to higher social classes and the nobility.[4]

1. Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 110-11.
2. Ibn Shuʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 184-85.
3. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 178-79.
4. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 45.

Return of Public Funds

One of the grievances that sparked protests against ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān was his excessive favoritism and lavish donations to those in his inner circle. On the second day of his caliphate, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) addressed the matter in a sermon, stating, "Any land that ʿUthmān had donated and any money that he had gifted must be returned to the treasury, as no right should be violated."[1] Furthermore, it is reported that Imam ʿAlī (a) emphasized that even if those possessions had been expended or utilized, they should still be returned to the treasury.[2]

As previously mentioned in our account of the events during ʿUthmān's caliphate, it was noted that the third caliph utilized the treasury and public funds according to his personal interests.[3] ʿAlī (a) issued an order for the return of specific possessions from within ʿUthmān's house to the treasury. According to this directive, any weapons discovered in his house that had caused harm to individuals and any charity camels should be relinquished to the treasury. Furthermore, any items that ʿUthmān had gifted to others were to be surrendered to the government, regardless of their current whereabouts. However, it should be noted that ʿAlī (a) commanded that ʿUthmān's personal belongings, such as his sword and armor, found within or outside his house, should not be confiscated.[4]

Distribution of Public Funds and Refusal to Retain Anything in the Treasury

During the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the public funds were allocated for specific purposes, and it was customary to distribute gifts among the people only once a year.[5] In certain instances, it is known that the caliph would borrow from the treasury to address his personal needs.[6] Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) expressed his disagreement with this policy and advised ʿUmar against retaining any funds in the treasury. Instead, he recommended that everything be distributed among the people,[7] as these funds belong to the public and are the rightful property of all individuals.

Imam ʿAlī (a) never retained or reserved any funds in the treasury, as he consistently distributed all of them equitably among the people. One day, while entering the treasury,

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1. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 269.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 15.
3. See Zubayr b. Bakkār, *Akhbār al-muwaffaqiyyāt*, 613; Ḥalabī, *al-Sīra al-Ḥalabiyya*, 2: 108.
4. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 270; see also Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 354.
5. See Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 48.
6. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 209.
7. Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 431-32.

ʿAlī (a) discovered some funds present and remarked, "These are here while people are in need." He immediately ordered for their distribution among the people.[1] After each distribution of the public funds, ʿAlī (a) would clean and tidy the treasury, following which he would offer two *rakʿas* of prayer within its premises. He did so in order to establish a testimony on the Day of Resurrection, affirming that he never withheld any funds from the Muslims.[2] ʿAlī (a) made regular visits to the treasury on a weekly basis. Whenever he found money there, he would immediately distribute it among the people.[3]

In historical records of the year 38/658-59, it is documented that the public funds were distributed among the people on three separate occasions. During that same year, when money was brought to the treasury from Isfahan, ʿAlī (a) delivered a sermon urging the people, saying: "Come forth for the fourth time to receive these gifts. I swear by God that I am not a guardian appointed to hold onto your money."[4] On another occasion, a sum of money arrived in the treasury late in the evening. Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) promptly issued the order for its immediate distribution among the people. However, his agents suggested, "It is already evening; let us postpone the distribution until tomorrow." In response, ʿAlī (a) questioned, "Can you assure me that I will still be alive tomorrow?" When they acknowledged their uncertainty, he firmly stated, "Let us not delay [the distribution of these funds]." Consequently, they brought a candle and worked throughout the night to divide the entire amount among the Muslim community.[5]

In reference to the approach of distributing public funds without reservation, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) expressed, "My friend, the Prophet (s), never left any funds [of the treasury for distribution] on the following day ... whereas ʿUmar established a [gifts] bureau and made it an annual event. However, I follow the example of the Prophet (s)."[6]

Establishing the House of Complaints

In his letter to Mālik al-Ashtar, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) stressed the significance of ensuring public satisfaction.[7] Furthermore, in a letter addressed to tax collection agents, he

1. Balāthurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 133.
2. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 1: 533.
3. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 49.
4. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 410.
5. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 404.
6. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 47-48.
7. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 50.

explicitly forbade them from appointing door guards.[1] Additionally, he offered counsel to his ruler in Mecca, urging him to establish direct connections with the people.[2]

ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) established designated places called the *bayt al-qaṣaṣ* (House of Complaints) where people could bring forward their grievances and concerns.[3] It appears that these locations were established to reiceve not only people's grievances but also their requests. Regarding this matter, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) expressed, "If anyone has a request for me, they may put it in writing. [I have done this to ensure that] you do not feel embarrassed to make a request."[4]

Removal of ʿUthmān-Appointed Rulers

One of the significant actions taken by ʿAlī (a) in the early 36/656 was the removal of incompetent rulers appointed by ʿUthmān and the selection of capable administrators in their place. ʿAlī (a) appointed rulers to various regions including Basra, Kufa, Yemen, Egypt, the Levant, Khorasan, and Mecca. However, two of these appointed rulers, Sahl b. Ḥunayf and ʿAmmāra b. Shihāb, failed to assume their positions. Sahl b. Ḥunayf, who was designated by the Imam to govern the Levant, reached the Tabuk region. When the local people discovered that he was sent by ʿAlī (a) to rule over them, they informed him, "If you were sent by ʿUthmān, you are welcome here, but if someone else sent you, then go back." Sahl b. Ḥunayf, realizing the situation, said, "Have you not heard what has happened?" They confirmed their awareness, and as a result, he returned to Medina. Similarly, ʿAmmāra b. Shihāb arrived in the Zubāla region located between Medina and Kufa. Ṭalḥa b. Khuwaylid, who sought vengeance for ʿUthmān's blood, confronted him and warned, "Go back! People do not want their ruler to be changed. If you do not go back, you will be beheaded." Consequently, ʿAmmāra b. Shihāb also decided to return. On the other hand, Abū Mūsā, the ruler of Kufa, sent a letter to Imam ʿAlī (a), informing him of the allegiance and submission of the people of Kufa to his authority. Additionally, Qays b. Saʿd, who was appointed by ʿAlī (a) as the ruler of Egypt, skillfully managed to win over the few remaining supporters of ʿUthmān and other opponents, thus consolidating his rule in the region. In Yemen, when ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿAbbās arrived, Yaʿlā b. Umayya, who had been ʿUthmān's appointed ruler there, fled to Mecca, taking whatever was in the treasury with him.[5]

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1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 108.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 67.
3. ʿAskarī, *al-Awāʾil*, 206; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 17: 87.
4. Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, 1: 199.
5. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 442-43; see also Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 141; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 179.

After Sahl b. Ḥunayf returned from the Levant, he informed ʿAlī (a) about Muʿāwiya's disobedience and his self-declaration as the caliph in that region. The Imam (a), upon receiving this news, called upon Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr and addressed them, saying, "The warning I had given you has now become a reality. This issue can only be resolved by its elimination."[1]

Muʿāwiya's Refusal to Relinquish Rule over the Levant

After ʿUthmān's assassination, ʿAlī (a) wrote a letter to Muʿāwiya, summoning him and requesting that he relinquish control of the Levant. However, Muʿāwiya proclaimed himself as the successor to ʿUmar and ʿUthmān, presenting himself as the avenger of the unjustly murdered caliph, ʿUthmān. He called upon people to obey him. Some individuals suggested to ʿAlī (a) that he should allow Muʿāwiya to remain as the ruler of the Levant, hoping that this might foster a closer relationship between them. However, the Imam intended to leave Medina and head towards the Levant.[2]

After the situation in Medina had settled, Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr approached Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) and requested his permission to go to Kufa and Basra. Their intention was to assist him with soldiers in case his opponents mounted a surprise military operation against his government. ʿAlī (a) asked for some time to consider their proposal. Some individuals advised Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) to retain ʿUthmān's appointed agents in their positions, including Muʿāwiya. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās urged ʿAlī (a) to keep ʿUthmān's agents in place. However, the Imam (a) responded by saying, "Regarding your suggestion to retain them, I swear by God that I have no doubt that from a worldly perspective, it would be beneficial and helpful. But my duty and the knowledge I possess about ʿUthmān's agents require me to remove all of them. If they agree to step down, it would be better for them. However, if they refuse, I will fight against them." Following this, the Imam (a) commanded Ibn ʿAbbās to proceed to the Levant and assume control over the region. However, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās declined the offer and expressed his concerns to ʿAlī (a), saying, "Muʿāwiya is from the Banū Umayya and ʿUthmān's cousin[3] and agent in the Levant. I fear that due to my relationship with you, he may have me executed or at the very least imprison me." Once again, Ibn ʿAbbās suggested that Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) extend Muʿāwiya's rule in the Levant, but the Imam (a) rejected the proposal once more.[4]

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1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 443.
2. For more detail, see Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 75; Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 77-80; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 102-4; Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 444-47.
3. Arabs commonly referred to their fellow tribe members as "cousin" (the son of one's paternal uncle, *ibn ʿamm*).
4. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 338-40; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 67-68; Masʾūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 354-56.

At the onset of his governance, ʿAlī (a) sent al-Miswar b. Mikhrama al-Zuhrī with a letter to invite Muʿāwiya to obey him and to compel the people of the Levant to pledge allegiance to him. Muʿāwiya detained ʿAlī's envoy in the Levant for three months and eventually handed him a blank sheet of paper with only the words "from Muʿāwiya to ʿAlī (a)." Upon his return, al-Miswar informed ʿAlī (a), saying, "I come from a people who believe that you are responsible for the killing of ʿUthmān, and they will not be satisfied until you are killed." Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), addressing the people of Medina, stated, "O people of Medina! I solemnly swear by God, either you engage in war, or they [the army of the Levant] will come to fight against you."[1] ʿAlī (a) designated Qutham b. ʿAbbās as his successor in Medina, rallied the people, and prepared his army for the journey to the Levant. The Imam (a) made it clear that anyone who wished to join him should leave Medina voluntarily, as he did not intend to force anyone. During this period, Imam ʿAlī (a) received news that Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, and ʿĀʾisha were en-route to Basra.[2]

ʿAlī (a) and the People of Jamal

As Muʿāwiya refused to step aside from ruling the Levant, Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr approached ʿAlī (a) and expressed their desire to share in the matter of the caliphate, stating, "We pledged allegiance to you on the condition that you share this matter [i.e, caliphate] with us." In response, ʿAlī (a) clarified, "That is not the case. You are partners in consultation, the reformation of matters, and assistance during times of hardship [but not in the caliphate itself]." Al-Zubayr then requested to govern Iraq, while Ṭalḥa sought the rule of Yemen. Upon realizing that they would have no share in ʿAlī's government, they began to object and complain. Seeking advice, ʿAlī (a) consulted with ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, who suggested that the rule of Basra be given to al-Zubayr and the rule of Kufa to Ṭalḥa. However, ʿAlī (a) expressed his concerns, saying, "Kufa and Basra are wealthy cities. If they were to rule over them, they might attract ignorant individuals and impose hardships on the impoverished. If I were to appoint rulers based solely on personal interests and potential harm, I might as well appoint Muʿāwiya as the ruler of the Levant. If Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr were not driven by greed for power, I would appoint them as rulers." After some time, Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr approached ʿAlī (a) once again, this time seeking permission to perform the Umrah pilgrimage. Perceiving their true intentions, the Imam looked at them and solemnly declared, "I swear by God that you do not intend to perform the Umrah pilgrimage, but rather wish to attend to your own personal

1. Balāthurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 211-12.
2. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 74.

affairs."[1] Upon hearing Amīr al-Muʾminīn's response, Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr swore by God that they had no intention of leaving Medina except for the purpose of performing the Umrah pilgrimage. They reassured ʿAlī (a) that they would not break their allegiance to him. Upon their solemn declarations, ʿAlī (a) requested them to reaffirm their allegiance to him. Upon complying, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) granted them permission to depart.[2] Upon their departure, Imam ʿAlī (a) stated, "I swear by God that their intention in leaving was not to perform the Umrah pilgrimage, but rather to sever their allegiance to me."[3]

Previously, it was mentioned that a friction arose between ʿUthmān and ʿĀʾisha due to his command to reduce her stipends.[4] The friction escalated to such an extent that when protests intensified against ʿUthmān, ʿĀʾisha refused Marwān b. al-Ḥakam's request to mediate between the caliph and the rioters. In fact, she openly expressed her desire for ʿUthmān's demise and subsequently embarked on a journey to Mecca to perform the Hajj pilgrimage. During this pilgrimage, she publicly criticized and reproached ʿUthmān.[5] While returning to Medina from the Hajj pilgrimage, ʿĀʾisha received the news of ʿUthmān's assassination and the subsequent pledge of allegiance to ʿAlī (a). Upon hearing this, she exclaimed, "I wish the sky would fall upon my head [so I would not witness this day]. ʿUthmān was unjustly killed, and I seek vengeance for his blood." A man who heard her statement was astonished by ʿĀʾisha's conflicting behavior towards ʿUthmān. He confronted her, saying, "Why do you speak in such a manner? I swear by God that I see no one closer to God in the heavens and the earth than ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a). Why do you harbor dislike for his caliphate? Was it not you who incited people to assassinate him [ʿUthmān]? You reproached him and even said, 'Kill the foolish old man as he has become a disbeliever'." ʿĀʾisha reiterated her stance on the unjust murder of ʿUthmān and then returned to Medina.[6]

These incidents provided a favorable opportunity for those who harbored discontent towards ʿAlī's caliphate. It is speculated that Yaʿlā b. Umayya, ʿUthmān's appointed ruler of Yemen, may have taken advantage of the situation. He allegedly approached ʿĀʾisha in Mecca, possibly bringing with him the funds he had embezzled from Yemen's treasury.[7]

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1. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 70-71; see also Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 179-80.
2. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 232.
3. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 180.
4. Ibid., 2: 175.
5. Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 2: 1172.
6. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 437-38; see also Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 448-49.
7. Al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 292/905) estimated that the wealth Yaʿlā possessed amounted to 400,000 dinars (Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 181). On the other hand, according to al-Ṭabarī, it was 600,000 dirhams, in addition to 600 camels (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*,

These individuals were able to rally the support of ʿĀ'isha and form an opposition front against Imam ʿAlī (a), which came to be known as al-Nākithūn or the Breakers of the Pledge.[1]

The potential involvement of Muʿāwiya in the pledge-breaking of Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr should not be overlooked. According to some accounts, possibly before their departure from Medina, Muʿāwiya had sent a letter to al-Zubayr, stating that he had secured the allegiance of the people of the Levant for al-Zubayr's caliphate and for Ṭalḥa as his successor. In this letter, Muʿāwiya suggested that for al-Zubayr to assume the position of caliphate, he needed to gain the support and allegiance of the people of Basra and Kufa. If he could exert influence over these two cities, he would be able to claim the caliphate. Furthermore, the letter proposed that they should emphasize seeking vengeance for ʿUthmān's blood and use this cause to rally people to their side.[2] Based on historical evidence, it is clear that Muʿāwiya had not received any allegiance from Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr. Instead, his actions were aimed at engaging ʿAlī (a) in another conflict, diverting his attention away from Muʿāwiya himself.

Furthermore, Muʿāwiya dispatched inflammatory letters to several members of the Banū Umayya, including Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿĀmir, al-Walīd b. ʿUqba, and Yaʿlā b. Umayya, with the aim of fueling opposition against ʿAlī (a).[3] Through these actions, Muʿāwiya successfully laid the groundwork for strengthening the ties between those who had initially refused to pledge allegiance to ʿAlī (a) and those who had later broken their allegiance to him. This paved the way for their gathering in Mecca. Muʿāwiya is reported to have stated that the Battle of Jamal presented the best opportunity for him. If ʿAlī (a) emerged victorious against the People of Jamal, Muʿāwiya would exploit their vengeance, as well as the vengeance for ʿUthmān, to propagate against ʿAlī (a). On the other hand, if they defeated ʿAlī (a), Muʿāwiya believed it would be much easier for him to overcome them than to overcome ʿAlī (a).[4]

4: 451-52). Meanwhile, al-Masʿūdī (d. 346/957) estimated the wealth to be around 400,000 dirhams (Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 357).

1. The term *al-Nākithūn* is derived from the Arabic word *nakatha*, which means the violation of one's pledge (Farāhīdī, *K. al-ʿAyn*, 5: 351). According to certain sources, there are hadiths that indicate the Prophet (s) had instructed ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) to combat against the *Nākithūn* or the Breakers of the pledge (see e.g. Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-Zakhakhar*, 2: 215, 3: 26; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 150; for more information, see Maliki Miyānijī, "Nhkithīn.").

2. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 231.

3. Ibid., 10: 236-40.

4. Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa l-tabyīn*, 2: 79.

ʿĀʾisha's Declaration of Vengeance for ʿUthmān

ʿĀʾisha received news of ʿUthmān's assassination while performing her Umrah pilgrimage in Mecca. Initially, she set out towards Medina under the impression that people had pledged their allegiance to Ṭalḥa. However, during her journey, she learned that people had actually pledged their allegiance to ʿAlī (a), including Ṭalḥa himself. This revelation led her to exclaim, "ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib has usurped their right, and the caliph [i.e., ʿUthmān] was unjustly killed." Subsequently, she ordered her servants to take her back to Mecca. Upon Yaʿlā b. Umayya's arrival in Mecca, who was ʿUthmān's appointed ruler of Yemen, and upon ʿUthmān's assassination, had embezzled Yemen's public funds and fled, he approached ʿĀʾisha. Yaʿlā told her, "The caliph against whom you enticed the people was killed." In response, ʿĀʾisha stated, "I dissociate from his murderer before God." Yaʿlā challenged her by saying, "Now [you say this]? Assert this word again [in public]." As a result, ʿĀʾisha went to the mosque and publicly dissociated herself from the killers of ʿUthmān.[1]

In order to gather support, ʿĀʾisha took the initiative to write letters to people in different regions. She addressed groups of people in Basra, including prominent figures like al-Aḥnaf b. Qays and Ṣabira b. Shaymān, urging them to join and provide their support to her cause.[2] Furthermore, ʿĀʾisha wrote letters to the people of Kufa, urging them to seek retribution for the blood of ʿUthmān. In these letters, she encouraged them to refrain from aligning with ʿAlī (a) and to undermine his attempts to gather an army. Additionally, she corresponded with the people of al-Yamāma and Medina.[3]

In her correspondences with people from various regions, ʿĀʾisha composed a letter addressed to Zayd b. Ṣūḥān, the leader of the Banū ʿAbd al-Qays tribe. The contents of her letter were as follows: "From ʿĀʾisha, the daughter of Abū Bakr, the Mother of Believers (*Umm al-Miʾminīn*), and the beloved [wife] of the Messenger of God, to her sincere child Zayd b. Ṣūḥān: If this letter reaches you, join us and lend your support to our cause. [However, if you choose not to do so], then divert people away from ʿAlī (a) and discourage them from gathering around him." In response, Zayd wrote: "From Zayd b. Ṣūḥān to ʿĀʾisha, the daughter of Abū Bakr and the beloved [wife] of the Messenger of God: I will remain your sincere child only if you abandon your current intentions and return home. Otherwise, I will be the first one to fight against you." Zayd later expressed, "May God bless the Mother of Believers [i.e., ʿĀʾisha]! She was instructed to stay at home,

1. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 162-63.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 461.
3. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 3: 219-20.

while we were commanded to be on the battlefield. She disobeyed her directive [to stay at home] and called us to it, whereas we obeyed our directive [to fight], and she prevented us from it."[1]

Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr joining ʿĀʾisha

Upon learning that ʿĀʾisha was inciting the people of Mecca to seek retribution for ʿUthmān, Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr departed from Medina, pretending to embark on an Umrah pilgrimage to Mecca. With the help of their sons, Muḥammad b. Ṭalḥa and ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, along with former officials of ʿUthmān, Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, Yaʿlā b. Umayya, and ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿĀmir, who had respectively traveled from Medina, Yemen, and Basra to Mecca, they endeavored to rally the people of Mecca against Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a).[2] To reach a final decision, they convened at ʿĀʾisha's residence to discuss how to combat ʿAlī (a). After dialogue and deliberation, they considered the viewpoint put forth by ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿĀmir that, given the remarkable number of ʿUthmān's advocates in Basra, they should embark on a journey towards Iraq. Their mission carried the banner of seeking vengeance for the slain caliph and advocating for the delegation of the caliphate position to a council.[3]

In order to garner the support of Umm Salama, another wife of the Prophet (s), ʿĀʾisha approached her and said, "My cousin [Ṭalḥa] and the husband of my sister [al-Zubayr] have informed me that ʿUthmān was innocently killed and that a majority of the people were dissatisfied with pledging allegiance to ʿAlī (a). A group of people in Basra has also opposed his caliphate. I implore you to join us! May God rectify the affairs of Muhammad's nation through our efforts."[4] Umm Salama, in response to ʿĀʾisha's appeal, said, "O daughter of Abū Bakr! You aspire to seek vengeance for ʿUthmān? I swear by God that you opposed him more vehemently than anyone else, and you even referred to him as *Naʿthal*.[5] What right do you have to seek retribution on his behalf?" Umm Salama then proceeded to remind ʿĀʾisha of the virtues and merits of ʿAlī (a).[6] Following her conversation with Umm Salama, ʿĀʾisha initially made the decision to remain in Mecca and refrain from joining Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr on their journey to Basra. However, they were able to persuade her to reconsider, and ultimately she changed her mind.

1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 476-77.
2. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 166.
3. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 78; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 452-53.
4. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 180.
5. Meaning a foolish old man.
6. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 454; Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 116.

Consequently, she set off towards Basra, accompanied by a group of individuals from Mecca.[1]

People of Jamal heading towards Basra

The town crier declared that the Mother of Believers, ʿĀʾisha, along with Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, were en-route to Basra. All those who sought to uphold the honor of Islam and seek justice for ʿUthmān were encouraged to join them. It was announced that those who lacked transportation or provisions for the journey would be provided with the necessary mounts and supplies.[2] Accompanied by a group of 700 individuals from both Medina and Mecca, they embarked from Mecca towards Iraq. As they journeyed, their numbers grew as others joined their cause, eventually reaching a total of 3,000 individuals.[3] Despite their efforts, they were unable to secure the support of ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar. Additionally, individuals such as Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ, ʿUthmān's son-in-law ʿAbd Allāh b. Khālid, and al-Mughīra b. Shuʿba had a change of heart and decided not to accompany them, as they discovered that Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr had ambitions of their own for assuming the caliphate.[4]

In any case, Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, and ʿĀʾisha proceeded with their journey towards Basra. During this time, Yaʿlā b. Umayya, who had brought a number of camels from Yemen, selected one specific camel named *ʿAskar* and presented it to ʿĀʾisha. She was provided with this camel to aid her during the expedition.[5] Upon learning the camel's name, *ʿAskar*, ʿĀʾisha immediately requested for it to be returned. When questioned about her decision, she explained that the Prophet (s) had specifically mentioned this camel to her in the past and had forbidden her from riding it. Consequently, the camel was discreetly taken away and its appearance was altered to deceive ʿĀʾisha into thinking that it was a different camel.[6]

As the army of Jamal passed through a region known as al-Ḥawʾab,[7] a group of dogs started barking at ʿĀʾisha. Filled with alarm, she exclaimed, "Take me back! I remember the words of the Messenger of God who warned me, 'Do not be a woman at whom the

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 181.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 451.
3. Ibid., 4: 452.
4. See Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 79-82.
5. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 222.
6. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 6: 224-25.
7. A region near Basra (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 2: 314).

dogs of al-Ḥawʾab bark'."[1] When ʿĀʾisha expressed her intention to turn back, ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr reassured her, saying, "Whoever claimed that this place is al-Ḥawʾab has lied." To support his statement, fifty other men present there also took an oath, testifying that the location they were in was not al-Ḥawʾab.[2] Suddenly, some members of the army raised an alarm, reporting that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a)'s army was approaching their location. In response to this news, the army swiftly resumed their march towards Basra.[3]

Amīr al-Muʾminīn's Preparations for Confrontation with the People of Jamal

ʿAlī (a) received a letter from his brother, ʿAqīl b. Abī Ṭālib, which provided detailed information about the activities of ʿĀʾisha, Ṭalḥa, and al-Zubayr. The letter also included news regarding the attack orchestrated by al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays on al-Ḥīra and al-Yamāma.[4] When Umm Salama learned of the intentions of Ṭalḥa, Al-Zubayr, and ʿĀʾisha to rebel against Imam ʿAlī (a), she wrote a letter from Mecca to the Imam in which she declared her support for the Imam (a).[5] After learning of Imam ʿAlī's (a) intention to go to Basra and confront the people of Jamal, Umm Salama wrote to him: "Go forth [towards Basra] with the divine protection and assistance. I solemnly swear by God that the truth is on your side, and you are on the side of truth. If it were not for my fear of disobeying God and His Messenger, I would have accompanied you myself. However, the Messenger of God instructed us [i.e., his wives] to remain at home. In my place, I am sending my son, ʿUmar, to accompany you. He is the best member of my family and holds a special place in my heart, even dearer to me than my own life."[6]

Upon being informed about the activities of the people involved in the Battle of Jamal, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) delivered a speech. In his address, he firmly rejected their claims of seeking vengeance for ʿUthmān and reminded the people of Medina about their pledge of allegiance to him. He urged them to stand by his side and assist him in thwarting the efforts of those involved in the conflict.[7] In response to the call for support, ʿAdī b. Ḥātim, a member of the Ṭayyiʾ tribe, and Zufar b. Zayd, hailing from the Banū Asad tribe, started

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 181; see also Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 82; Balādhirī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 224. This hadith appears in many firsthand Sunni sources of hadith (Maʿmar b. Rāshid, *Jāmiʿ*, 11: 365; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 7: 536; Ibn Rāhawayh, *Musnad*, 3: 891; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 40: 298, 41: 197; Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 11: 73; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 129).
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 224; see also Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 181.
3. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 7: 231.
4. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 74-75.
5. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 6: 219.
6. Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 129.
7. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 245-46.

mobilizing warriors to rally behind ʿAlī's cause.[1] Several individuals from the Muhājirūn and Anṣār chose not to participate in the conflict, including ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar, Muḥammad b. Maslama al-Anṣārī, and Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ. Despite ʿAmmār b. Yāsir's efforts to persuade them to join Amīr al-Muʾminīn's army, they declined, each providing their own excuse. Upon learning of their refusal, Imam ʿAlī (a) remarked to ʿAmmār, "Leave these individuals be. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar lacks strength [in his faith], Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ is driven by envy, and Muḥammad b. Maslama holds grudges against me due to my killing of Marḥab the Jewish [the killer of] his brother."[2] Furthermore, a number of individuals opted to leave Medina and sought refuge in Taif to avoid involvement in the war. They included Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, al-Mughīra b. Shuʿba, and Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ.[3] As shall be noted later, however, they finally ended up joining the army of ʿĀʾisha.

Mobilizing the Army

Due to insufficient support from the people, ʿAlī (a) faced challenges in swiftly assembling an army to march towards Basra upon discovering the plans of the people involved in the Battle of Jamal. However, after some time, in the late Rabīʿ II, 36/November 656, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) took the decision to appoint Tammām b. ʿAbbās as his successor in Medina, and Qutham b. ʿAbbās as his successor in Mecca. Following these appointments, ʿAlī (a), accompanied by approximately 900 individuals, departed from Medina and journeyed to the al-Rabadha region.[4] In this region, he was joined by other individuals, but he received news that the people of Jamal had departed. ʿAlī (a) and his companions held consultations, and they dispatched Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr and Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib to Kufa to rally the people there. Additionally, an envoy was sent to Media, requesting horses and weapons from the inhabitants there. As he warned of the dangers of sedition and division among the people, ʿAlī (a) addressed those around him, saying, "Indeed, God the Esteemed and Glorified has honored us with Islam... The people were so that Islam was their religion, the truth [prevailed] among them, and the Quran was their guide. However, when this man [ʿUthmān] was killed by those who were deceived by Satan, sedition and unrest engulfed the people. Truly, this nation will be divided just like previous nations. Therefore, let us seek refuge in God from the impending evil."[5]

1. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 77-78.
2. Ibid., 1: 72-73.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 223.
4. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 455.
5. Ibid., 4: 478-79.

Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī held the belief that the caliphate belongs to the individual who assumes governance, and he considered military dominance as a determining factor for the legitimacy of the caliphate.[1] When confronted with Amīr al-Muʾminīn's request for military support against the people of Jamal, Abū Mūsā declined to send the army of Kufa to aid ʿAlī (a). He reasoned that it was not advisable to participate in seditions and that the Battle of Jamal was an example of a divisive conflict or sedition (*fitna*).[2] It is important to mention that ʿĀʾisha's letter to the people of Kufa, urging them not to join ʿAlī's army, also played a significant role in Abū Mūsā's decision.[3] Abū Mūsā addressed the people of Kufa in a speech, saying, "O people of Kufa! If you follow my advice, you will become a sanctuary for the Arabs. The oppressed will seek refuge in you, and the fearful will find safety among you. O people! Seditions breed uncertainty, and when they subside, the truth becomes clear. We are facing a sedition that threatens to destroy our religion. We do not know its origin or where it will lead us. Keep your swords sheathed, render your arrows useless, unstring your bows, and stay at home. O people! Those who remain dormant during times of sedition are better than those who stand in them, and those who stand are better than those who strive for them."[4]

In the region of al-Rabadha, ʿAlī (a) was informed about the defiance of Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī, the governor of Kufa. He called upon Mālik al-Ashtar, who had previously advocated for maintaining Abū Mūsā in his position, and said to him, "You had advised me to retain Abū Mūsā as the governor. Now, along with Ibn ʿAbbās, go [to Kufa] and rectify the situation."[5] Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) entrusted them with a letter intended for the people of Kufa. The contents of the letter were as follows:

> "I am informing you about the events surrounding ʿUthmān in a manner that the listener would feel as if they had witnessed them firsthand. People criticized ʿUthmān, but as a member of the Muhājirūn, I voiced the fewest criticisms and made significant efforts to rectify the situation. However, it was Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr who instigated the sedition as swifty as fast camels. ʿĀʾisha, in her anger, made statements that incited people to attack and kill him [i.e., ʿUthmān]. Following his murder, people voluntarily pledged their allegiance to me without coercion. Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr were among the first to pledge their allegiance to me, upholding the same covenant they had with the previous caliphs. They then

1. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 213.
2. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 359.
3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 461.
4. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 145; see also Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 85.
5. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 3: 227.

> sought my permission to perform the Umrah pilgrimage, and I granted them permission [to leave Medina]. However, they broke their pledge and declared war. [Furthermore,] they took the Prophet's wife with them, intending to incite sedition. They selected Basra as their base [for creating unrest] and proceeded towards it. I urge you to heed not only my call but also the call of God. I am sending my son, al-Ḥasan, my cousin ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, and Qays b. Saʿd to you. Therefore, accompany them as expected, for God is our helper."[1]

Mālik, ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, and Imam al-Ḥasan (a) arrived in Kufa. Through their speeches, which were delivered by Imam al-Ḥasan, Shurayḥ b. Hānī, and Qays b. Saʿd, they successfully motivated the people of Kufa to unite and join Imam ʿĀlī's army.[2] Qaraẓa b. Kaʿb al-Anṣārī was appointed by Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) as the ruler of Kufa, and was sent there alongside Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and ʿAmmār.[3]

In al-Rabadha,[4] a significant location on the route of Iraqi and Levantine pilgrims to the Kaaba, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) delivered a sermon for the pilgrims. In his speech, he defended his rightful claim to the caliphate. After expressing gratitude to God and providing a historical context of the ARabīʿan Peninsula before the advent of Islam, emphasizing the Prophet's guidance, he proclaimed, "I solemnly swear by God that I remained steadfast under His guidance. I have not deviated from it or betrayed it. I was in the same righteous state when [the caliphate] turned away from me. What connection do I have with the Quraysh? I swear by God that I have fought against them when they were still unbelievers, and now, when they have been deceived, I shall confront them once again. My path is rooted in the covenant I have made."[5]

The Jamal Army Arriving in Basra

Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, ʿĀ'isha, and their supporters arrived in Basra, where they were joined by numerous tribes, including Azd and Banū Ḍabba. Upon learning of their presence and intentions, ʿUthmān b. Ḥunayf, the governor of Imam ʿAlī (a) in Basra, sent individuals to inquire about the reason for their arrival and to engage in negotiations with them.[6] Meanwhile, ʿUthmān b. Ḥunayf instructed the people to arm themselves and prepare for

1. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 86; see also Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 1.
2. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 86-87.
3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 499-500.
4. According to *Nahj al-balāgha*, this sermon was delivered in the Dhū Qār region (Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 33).
5. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 247-48.
6. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 461-62.

a potential battle. At this moment, a man rose and addressed the crowd, saying, "O people! They have come here seeking vengeance for ʿUthmān, but they are well aware that we are not the ones who killed him. Let us send them back to where they came from." In response, a man from Basra countered, "[They know that we are not ʿUthmān's killers,] but they have come seeking our support against ʿUthmān's killers."[1] Upon hearing the exchange, ʿUthmān b. Ḥunayf became aware that the people involved in the Battle of Jamal had garnered support in Basra and realized the potential danger that lay ahead.[2] Shortly after, Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, and ʿĀ'isha addressed the people of Basra, highlighting the virtues of ʿUthmān and reminding them of his unjust murder. They emphasized the necessity of seeking justice and avenging his death.[3]

In her sermon, ʿĀ'isha expressed her opinion, saying, "O people! I solemnly swear by God that the sins attributed to ʿUthmān were not grave enough to justify his bloodshed. The proper course of action is to identify and bring to justice those responsible for his murder. Then, we should transition to a council, following the precedent set by ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb." Following ʿĀ'isha's speech, a division emerged among the people. Some embraced her perspective, while others rejected it. In the midst of this turmoil, a prominent figure in Basra revealed a letter written by Ṭalḥa, encouraging the people of Basra to rise against ʿUthmān. This revelation caused Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr to justify their change of stance, which only fueled further disputes among the people. Amidst these events, Jāriya b. Qudāma, a companion of the Prophet (s), approached ʿĀ'isha and voiced her concern, saying, "The murder of ʿUthmān is not as distressing to us as seeing you leave the sanctity of your home atop this camel. You were divinely protected and concealed, but by revealing yourself, you have compromised your own respect. Those who wish to fight you will find it easier to kill you. O Mother of Believers! If you have willingly chosen to leave your home, I implore you to return, and if you have been coerced into leaving, then seek forgiveness from God."[4]

The First Conflict, Peace with the People of Jamal, and Their Violation of the Treaty

The division among the people and their clashes continued until nightfall. Then people returned to their homes; the leaders of the Jamal party, following the advice of some

1. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 7: 231.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 463.
3. Ibid., 4: 463-64.
4. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 87-88; see also Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 465.

Basrans, left the city and settled in the al-Zābūqa region.[1] The forces of Jamal prepared for war, gathering their supporters under the cover of darkness. In response, ʿUthmān b. Ḥunayf made the decision to launch an offensive, leading his soldiers into a full-scale battle. Initially, the army of Jamal put up a fierce resistance, inflicting casualties among ʿUthmān b. Ḥunayf's troops. However, the Ibn Ḥunayf army rallied and achieved a victory, vanquishing a significant number of Jamal's soldiers. In light of their defeat, the leaders of the Jamal faction sought a peace treaty, and ʿUthmān b. Ḥunayf accepted their offer of peace.[2]

The Peace Treaty and Its Violation

After the peace treaty was established, certain terms and conditions were agreed upon. According to the treaty, ʿUthmān b. Ḥunayf would have control over specific areas, including the governor's palace (*Dār al-Imāra*), the al-Raḥba neighborhood,[3] the mosque, and the *minbar* (which implied the imamate for congregational prayers in the city). Additionally, ʿUthmān b. Ḥunayf would also have access to the treasury. On the other hand, Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, and their army were granted the freedom to reside anywhere within Basra without any restrictions. However, it was a crucial condition of the peace treaty that neither side would harm the other until Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) arrived in the city. Once Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) reached Basra, the opponents would have several options before them. They could choose to follow the rest of the Islamic nation and pledge their allegiance to him, or they could opt for alternative paths such as engaging in war, seeking peace, leaving the city, or continuing to reside in the city.[4]

However, Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr made the decision to violate the agreement. They acted out of fear that the people of Basra would show allegiance to ʿAlī (a) upon his arrival. Under the cover of a cold and stormy night, during the time of the *ʿIshāʾ* prayer, their army launched an assault on the mosque where ʿUthmān b. Ḥunayf and his companions were present. In the ensuing confrontation, Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr's forces defeated them. They subjected ʿUthmān b. Ḥunayf to severe physical abuse, leaving no

1. An area in the outskirts of Basra (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 3: 125).

2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 466-67; see also Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 226.

3. The al-Raḥba neighborhood, also referred to as *Raḥbat Banī Hāshim* and al-Dahnāʾ, was a central district within Basra. It encompassed various important establishments, including the mosque, the governor's palace, the central prison, the tax bureau, and the central public bath (Ibn al-Faqīh, *al-Buldān*, 230).

4. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 9: 319-20.

hair intact on his face.[1] Following this incident, the army of Jamal proceeded to loot the treasury of Basra, resulting in the death of four guards who attempted to protect it. Additionally, ʿUthmān b. Ḥunayf was forcefully expelled from Basra. The violence escalated as approximately 40 to 70 guards of the treasury lost their lives during these events. Subsequently, the army of Jamal organized itself into a military formation.[2] After establishing their control over Basra, a disagreement arose between Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr regarding the imamate of congregational prayers. Since their role was that of governors rather than caliphs, it was decided that neither of them would lead the congregational prayers. Instead, a solution was reached wherein Muḥammad b. Ṭalḥa and ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr would take turns leading the congregational prayers on alternate days.[3]

The Minor Battle of Jamal

When the commander of ʿUthmān b. Ḥunayf's army, Ḥukaym b. Jabala, became aware of the atrocities committed by Jamal's forces against ʿUthmān, the treasury, and the guards, he called upon his own tribe, Banū ʿAbd al-Qays, to take action. He urged them, saying, "O people! Launch an attack against these misguided individuals who have shed the blood of respected individuals, killed righteous servants of God, and treated what is forbidden by God as permissible." In response, approximately 700 people gathered in the mosque of Basra. Ḥukaym raised his hands towards the sky and beseeched, "O God! Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr have no intention of seeking proximity to You through their actions. They desire nothing but worldly gains. O God! Bring retribution upon them for the lives they have taken and withhold from them their worldly desires." Ḥukaym then took up his weapon, mounted his horse, and went out to confront the enemy, but he lost his life in the ensuing battle.[4] According to some accounts, since Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr had brought ʿĀ'isha on a *jamal* (Arabic for camel) to this battle, it came to be called *al-jamal al-aṣghar* (the Minor Battle of Jamal).[5]

1. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 226; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 181.
2. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 89.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 228.
4. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 283; see also Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 226-28.
5. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 9: 322. In some other sources, too, it is referred to as *al-jamal al-aṣghar* (See e.g., Khalīfa b. al-Khayyāṭ, *Ṭabaqāt*, 99; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 714).

Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) Learning about the Events Unfolding in Basra

In the region of al-Thaʿlabiyya,[1] news reached ʿAlī (a) about the mistreatment inflicted upon his appointed ruler by the forces of Jamal.[2] ʿUthmān b. Ḥunayf met Imam ʿAlī (a) on his way towards Basra, and said, "O Amīr al-Muʾminīn! You had sent me with beard and I have returned to you without beard." He proceeded to recount what had happened to him to Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a).[3] ʿAlī (a) responded, saying, "May God reward you! Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr pledged allegiance to me, but they later broke their allegiance and incited people against me."[4] On the journey to Basra, the Banū ʿAbd al-Qays tribe joined Imam ʿAlī's army, bolstering its numbers to approximately 10,000 members. Furthermore, with the addition of prominent figures from Kufa such as Mālik al-Ashtar al-Nakhaʿī, al-Musayyib b. Najaba al-Fazārī, and Ḥujr b. ʿAdī al-Kindī, his military strength was further solidified.[5]

In Dhū Qār,[6] during the renewal of allegiance by those in attendance, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) expressed, "Indeed, there were incidents that tested our patience while thorns were in our eyes. We endured these trials out of submission to divine decree and in anticipation of divine rewards. Our patience in those trying times was preferable to the division among Muslims and the shedding of their blood. We are the household of Prophethood, the most entitled of all creation to the authority of the message, and the source of the honor with which God began this nation. Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr do not belong to the Prophet's Household nor are they of his lineage. When they realized that our rightful position [as the caliphate] was restored, they wasted no time, not even waiting for a month or a year. Instead, they adopted the ways of those who came before, seeking to usurp my rightful position and scatter the Muslims away from me." Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) concluded by invoking a curse upon Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr.[7]

The Arrival of Amīr al-Muʾminīn's Army in Basra

During his stay in Dhu Qār, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) dispatched a prominent figure from Kufa, to Basra in order to meet with ʿĀʾisha and inquire about the purpose of their arrival. ʿĀʾisha raised the issue of rectifying the *Umma*, while Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr focused on

1. A region on the way from Kufa to Mecca, which was traveled by Hajj pilgrims (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 2: 78).
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 481.
3. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 182.
4. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 480.
5. Ibid., 4: 487-88.
6. A region in Iraq, between Basra and Kufa (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 4: 293).
7. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 249.

seeking vengeance for ʿUthmān. After engaging in negotiations with them, Messenger of Imam returned to inform ʿAlī (a) that the leaders of the Jamal incident had no intentions but righteousness, Ummah's rectification, peace, or seeking justice for ʿUthmān. In a speech, Imam ʿAlī (a) confirmed these causes and a peaceful resolution seemed attainable. However, the situation worsened due to the gathering of ʿUthmān's killers in Dhū Qār, their exertion of pressure and deception, instigation by certain factions of the Jamal army to seek vengeance for ʿUthmān, and the inclination of some segments from both armies towards war. Despite attempts at negotiation by prominent figures such as Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣūḥān and ʿĀbd Allāh b. ʿĀbbās with the leaders of the Jamal army, their efforts proved futile, ultimately leading the two armies towards an inevitable conflict.[1]

An Ultimatum to the Leaders of the Jamal Army

In an effort to prevent the war, ʿAlī (a) wrote letters to the people of Basra for three consecutive days, urging them to obey him and abstain from disobedience. However, he did not receive any response from them.[2] He also composed a letter to Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, reproaching them for breaking their oath of allegiance and orchestrating the removal of the Mother of Believers, ʿĀ'isha, from her home. In his letter, he expressed, "You know that I did not seek power, but it was thrust upon me by the people. I did not accept their allegiance until they compelled me to do so. Both of you were among those who pledged allegiance to me. Your allegiance was not based on my domination of the government or your personal desires ... What business do you have seeking vengeance for ʿUthmān? You are the ones who pledged allegiance to me and then betrayed it, taking your mother [i.e., ʿĀ'isha] from her abode, where God had commanded her to remain. God will hold you accountable." Additionally, Imam ʿAlī (a) wrote a letter to ʿĀ'isha. In response, Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr only provided oral replies, stating, "You will not be satisfied unless we submit to your authority, and we will not submit. So do as you wish."[3]

In another attempt to prevent the war, Imam ʿAlī (a) made a second effort by sending ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās and Zayd b. Ṣūḥān to ʿĀ'isha. He instructed them, "Go to ʿĀ'isha and convey this message: 'Has God not commanded you to remain in your home? You have been deceived and lured away from your home. You were tricked into leaving. Repent to God, for your ultimate return is to Him, and God accepts the repentance of His servants. Your ties of kinship with Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr should not lead you to actions that can cast

1. For more details about this negotiations, see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 488-507.

2. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 147.

3. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 465-66; see also Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 54; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 90-91; Irbilī, *Kashf al-ghumma*, 1: 239-40.

you into the fires of hell'." The envoys went to ʿĀ'isha and delivered Imam ʿAlī's message to her. However, ʿĀ'isha responded, "I will not respond because I cannot refute ʿAlī's arguments." The envoys then returned to Imam ʿAlī (a) and recounted what had transpired.[1] However, none of these measures could prevent the war.

Preparations of the Two Armies

Imam ʿAlī (a) rallied his supporters, motivating them to confront the oath-breakers, and organized his army accordingly. He designated ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās at the forefront of the army, Hind al-Murādī at the rear, ʿAmmār b. Yāsir as the leader of the cavalry, and Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr as the commander of the infantry. On the opposing side, within the army of Jamal, ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr was appointed to lead the infantry, Muḥammad b. Ṭalḥa commanded the central part of the army, Marwān b. al-Ḥakam took the front position, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿUbāda positioned himself on the right wing, and Hilāl b. Wakīʿ positioned himself on the left wing.[2]

While preparing their respective armies, Imam ʿAlī (a) sent a messenger to Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, inquiring, "What is it that you seek?" They responded, "The murderers of ʿUthmān." Upon hearing this, Imam ʿAlī (a) solemnly declared, "May God's curse be upon the murderers of ʿUthmān." The soldiers of Imam ʿAlī's army formed their ranks, and he addressed them, saying, "Do not release arrows, do not use spears, do not strike with swords, and issue an ultimatum." However, when some of the Imam's soldiers were struck by arrows from the army of Jamal, he lamented, "O God! Bear witness to this."[3] After three days of issuing ultimatums, Imam ʿAlī (a) entrusted the army's flag to Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya and commanded the initiation of the war.[4] Shortly thereafter, Imam ʿAlī (a) addressed his companions, saying, "O people! Who among you will take hold of this Quran and invite them to what it contains?" A servant from the Mujāshiʿ clan volunteered for the task, but he was killed by a soldier from the army of Jamal.[5]

1. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 467. Here, the name of the envoy is mentioned as "Yazīd b. Ṣūḥān," but the correct name is "Zayd b. Ṣūḥān."
2. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 89-90.
3. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 182.
4. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 147.
5. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 473; see also Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 509, 511.

Initiation of the War

The Battle of Jamal took place on Sunday, Jumādā II 10, 36/December 18, 656. It occurred in the al-Khurayba region[1] and lasted for approximately half a day.[2] Despite the fierce resistance from the army of Jamal, as well as the support of various tribes such as Banū Qays, Banū Khuzāʿa, al-Ribāb, Madhḥij, Rabīʿa, and notably Azd and Banū Ḍabba who were guarding ʿĀ'isha's camel, Imam ʿAlī's forces emerged victorious. During the battle, Aʿyan b. Ḍubayʿa hamstrung ʿĀ'isha's camel and caused her howdah to collapse.[3]

Al-Zubayr's Regret and Ṭalḥa's Conversation with ʿAlī (a)

Amidst the chaos of war, Imam ʿAlī (a) called out to al-Zubayr, saying, "O Abā ʿAbd Allāh! Come closer, so that I may remind you of something we both heard from the Prophet (s)." As al-Zubayr approached, Imam ʿAlī (a) said to him, "Did the Prophet (s) not inform you that a day would come when you would rebel against him [i.e., ʿAlī (a)], while you are acting unjustly towards him?"[4] Al-Zubayr, taken aback by the reminder, uttered, "O God! I had indeed forgotten these words in the heat of the moment." Initially, he loosened the reins of his horse, intending to retreat. However, his son ʿAbd Allāh cautioned him, saying, "It is the gleaming swords of Banū Hāshim that have frightened you,"[5] while ʿĀ'isha remarked, "O al-Zubayr! It is evident that you fear ʿAlī's sword."[6] Provoked by these words, al-Zubayr gripped his sword and launched an attack on Imam ʿAlī's companions, exclaiming, "Does a coward act in such a manner?"[7] However, al-Zubayr ultimately left the battlefield.[8]

Imam ʿAlī (a) engaged in a conversation with Ṭalḥa, where he refuted Ṭalḥa's assertion of being coerced into pledging allegiance. He reminded Ṭalḥa that, just as he had taken no action against individuals like Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar, and Muḥammad b. Maslama who had chosen not to pledge allegiance, he would not have

1. An area in Basra (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 3: 363).

2. Regarding the duration of the battle, historical sources present varying accounts. Al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) suggests that it took place from noon until sunset (Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 241). Al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 292/905) states that it lasted for approximately four hours (Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 183). On the other hand, al-Ṭabarī asserts that it spanned from morning till sunset (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 523).

3. For more details, see Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 182-86; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 95-7; Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 148-51; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 239-46; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 180-84.

4. This statement of the Prophet (s) has been narrated in the Sunni hadith sources with varying wording (see e.g., Maʿmar b. Rāshid, *Jāmiʿ*, 11: 241; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 7: 545; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 412, 413).

5. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 182-83.

6. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 470.

7. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 183.

8. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 471.

harmed Ṭalḥa if he had made the same choice. Furthermore, Imam ʿAlī (a) reproached Ṭalḥa for bringing the Prophet's wife, ʿĀ'isha, with him to the conflict while he had left his own wife at home.[1]

The Killing of Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr

As the evening descended upon the battlefield, Ṭalḥa and Marwān b. al-Ḥakam fought side by side. Suddenly, the army of Jamal made the decision to retreat. Witnessing their sudden withdrawal, Marwān declared, "From this day forth, we shall no longer seek vengeance for ʿUthmān." He then launched an arrow towards Ṭalḥa, striking his leg and inflicting a severe wound. Addressing Abān b. ʿUthmān, the son of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, Marwān proclaimed, "I have avenged your father by killing one of his murderers." With the assistance of one of his attendants, Ṭalḥa sought refuge in a nearby house, but succumbed to his injuries and passed away.[2] Before his passing, Ṭalḥa uttered these words, "I swear by God that no elder from the Quraysh has suffered the waste of blood [as I have]. I swear by God that I never engaged in any matter without knowing my rightful place, except for this event [i.e., the Battle of Jamal]."[3] In a different version of events, upon hearing that al-Zubayr had withdrawn from the battle, Ṭalḥa also contemplated retreating. However, as news of Ṭalḥa's intention reached Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, he swiftly shot an arrow that struck Ṭalḥa's leg, ultimately leading to his demise.[4]

Al-Zubayr had already withdrawn from the battle when, with the instigations of al-Aḥnaf b. al-Qays, who had previously left the battlefield, he was killed in a surprise attack in Wādī al-Sibāʿ[5] by ʿAmr b. Jarmūz.[6] When ʿAlī (a) heard about this and saw al-Zubayr's sword, he sorrowfully exclaimed, "With this very sword, he fought valiantly alongside the Messenger of God (s) in numerous battles. What a tragic end he has met now!"[7] The Imam

1. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 94-5.

2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 246; see also Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 389.

3. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 182.

4. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 148; Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 365. Many sources assert that Ṭalḥa met his demise due to an arrow shot by Marwān b. al-Ḥakam. This is explicitly stated by Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr (d. 463/1071), who affirms, "Trustworthy scholars are in unanimous agreement that Marwān b. al-Ḥakam was the one who killed Ṭalḥa" (Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 2: 766).

5. An area near Basra (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 5: 343).

6. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 148. It is worth mentioning that there are conflicting accounts regarding the identity of al-Zubayr's killer and the manner in which he was killed. Some sources suggest that al-Zubayr was actually killed by al-Aḥnaf b. Qays himself (for more information, see Nājī, and Muṭahharī-niyā, "Zubar b. ʿAwwām," 21: 274-78).

7. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 388-89; Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 2: 516; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 2: 252.

(a) warned al-Zubayr's killer that he would face the hellfire for this action.[1] This was because al-Zubayr had already withdrawn from the battle, and yet Ibn Jarmūz deceitfully executed him through cunning schemes.

ʿAlī's Treatment of the Enemy's Survivors

During the battle, notable individuals such as ʿĀ'isha, Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, ʿAmr b. ʿUthmān (son of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān), Musā b. Ṭalḥa (son of Ṭalḥa), and ʿAmr b. Saʿīd (son of Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ) were captured by ʿAlī's army. However, they chose to pledge their allegiance to him. As a result, they were granted their freedom and pardoned.[2] Through the intercessions of Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), Marwān b. al-Ḥakam attempted to pledge allegiance to ʿAlī (a). However, the Imam responded by saying, "Did he not pledge allegiance to me right after ʿUthmān was killed? I have no need of his pledge now"[3]

When the war came to an end, ʿAlī (a) issued a prohibition to his companions, forbidding them from seizing the possessions of the fallen enemies and ensuring the release of their women and children. However, some individuals voiced their objections, questioning the permissibility of killing them while denying the right to claim their belongings, women, and children. In response, the Imam posed a rhetorical question, asking, "Which one of you would dare to lay claim upon ʿĀ'isha?"[4]

Following that, ʿAlī (a) raised his voice among his army, issuing a stern command, "Be warned! Do not harm any wounded individual, do not pursue those who are fleeing, and refrain from throwing spears at those who are trying to escape. Whoever seeks refuge by closing the door of their house shall be safe, and whoever relinquishes their weapons shall be safe."[5] ʿAlī (a) issued a general safety conduct for everyone. He then dispatched Ibn ʿAbbās to convey a message to ʿĀ'isha, urging her to return to Medina. However, upon Ibn ʿAbbās' arrival, ʿĀ'isha expressed her grievances, stating, "O son of ʿAbbās! You have erred in your observance of the traditions twice. You entered my home without my permission and sat on my carpet without my permission." Ibn ʿAbbās responded, "It is we who have imparted knowledge of traditions to you. This house does not belong to you. Your true residence is where the Prophet (s) left you and the Quran commanded

1. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 252.
2. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 97.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 73.
4. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 97-98.
5. Saʿīd b. Manṣūr, *Sunan*, 2: 389, 390; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 498; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 262.

you to stay."[1] ʿĀ'isha found herself residing in the house of a supporter of ʿUthmān in Basra when ʿAlī (a) approached her. He addressed her, saying, "O Ḥumayrā' [a title of ʿĀ'isha]! Were you not forbidden from participating in uprisings?" In response, ʿĀ'isha replied, "O son of Abī Ṭālib! Now that you have emerged victorious, act with kindness."[2]

In another incident, prior to her return to Medina, ʿĀ'isha stayed in the house of ʿAbd Allāh b. Khalaf, where ʿAlī (a) paid her a visit. During this encounter, ʿAbd Allāh's wife directed harsh words towards Imam ʿAlī (a), saying, "O the killer of your relatives! Just as you have turned ʿAbd Allāh's sons into orphans, may God also make your children orphans." Initially, ʿAlī (a) chose not to respond to her provocation. However, as she persisted in her curses, he finally replied, "[If I were truly a killer of my relatives], I would order the killing of all those who reside in this house and others." Furthermore, when the Imam learned that some injured survivors from the army of Jamal had sought refuge in the house of ʿAbd Allāh, along with ʿĀ'isha, he ensured their safety and did not allow anyone to harm them. Later, as ʿAlī (a) was departing from ʿĀ'isha's presence, he overheard a man from the Azd tribe expressing his disapproval, saying, "This woman must not escape punishment." Hearing these words, ʿAlī (a) became infuriated and sternly commanded, "Be silent! Do not disrespect others, do not invade their homes, and do not harm any women, even if they curse you and dub your leader as unwise."[3]

Amīr al-Mu'minīn's Treatment of ʿĀ'isha after the Battle

ʿAlī (a) responded to ʿĀ'isha's misconduct with compassion and treated her with kindness. He generously provided her with provisions for her journey to Medina. Additionally, he personally visited the house where she resided and arranged for trustworthy individuals to accompany her. On Rajab 1, 36/December 565, when ʿĀ'isha departed, ʿAlī (a) bid her farewell and instructed his own sons to accompany her for a day.[4]

Due to ʿAlī's foreknowledge of ʿĀ'isha's uprising, which was revealed to him by the Prophet (s),[5] he arranged for her journey to Medina accompanied by a group of

1. This is a reference to a Quranic injunction that specifically instructs the Prophet's wives to remain in their homes: "Stay in your houses and do not flaunt your finery like the former [days of pagan] ignorance" (Q 33: 33).

2. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 183.

3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 539-40.

4. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 347-70; see also Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 544; Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, 1: 507.

5. There are hadiths in Sunni sources to the effect that the Prophet (s) tells ʿAlī (a), "something will occur between you and ʿĀ'isha … return her where she feels secure." These hadiths can be found in early Sunni sources, although the specific wordings may vary (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 45: 175; Fasawī, *Mashikha*, 51; Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 9: 326; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 129).

individuals. Among them was her own brother, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, as well as 40 women from Basra. As the day of departure approached, ʿĀ'isha acknowledged that "there were past grievances between me and ʿAlī (a), which are common between a woman and her husband's relatives."[1] As ʿĀ'isha was preparing to depart, Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a) commanded 40 women to don armor, helmets, and wield swords, creating an appearance that non-mahram (unrelated) men were accompanying her. This caused confusion for ʿĀ'isha during the journey, and she expressed her concern about ʿAlī (a) having accompanied non-mahram men with her. However, when they reached the vicinity of Medina, those women removed their turbans and hats, revealing their true identities, and entered the city alongside ʿĀ'isha. ʿĀ'isha regretted her earlier complaints and stated, "May God reward the son of Abū Ṭālib abundantly for upholding the honor of the Messenger of God."[2]

The Declaration of General Amnesty

Following the Battle of Jamal, ʿAlī (a) surveyed the battlefield, examining the fallen bodies of those who had participated in the conflict. As he came across the lifeless forms of certain individuals, he felt a sense of grief and lamentation for their demise and voiced his disapproval of their decision to rise up against him.[3] Afterwards, ʿAlī (a) composed a letter expressing his admiration for the people of Kufa. Following this, he delivered a sermon in which he reproached the inhabitants of Basra for their involvement in the conflict. However, he also extended a general amnesty to them, declaring, "I have pardoned all of you, but avoid further seditions. You were the first to break your allegiance and disrupt the unity of the nation." He then sought their renewed allegiance.[4]

The Spoils of the Army of Jamal

ʿAlī (a) issued a directive specifying that only the weapons and military equipment belonging to the enemy should be considered as spoils of war. However, he instructed that all other possessions seized during the conflict should be returned to their rightful owners if they were still alive. In the case of individuals who had lost their lives, their belongings were to be handed over to their heirs.[5] Following the instructions of ʿAlī (a), the possessions that were acquired during the conflict were gathered and stored in the

1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 544.
2. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 415; see also Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 98; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 183.
3. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 254-57.
4. Ibid., 1: 287.
5. Ibn Ḥayyūn, *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, 1: 389.

mosque of Basra. A proclamation was made, inviting the rightful owners to come to the mosque and reclaim their belongings.[1] After the proper burial of the deceased soldiers, Imam ʿAlī (a) proceeded to the treasury of Basra. As he laid eyes upon the abundance of golden and silver coins stored within, he expressed, "O gold and silver! Find someone else to deceive."[2] Imam ʿAlī (a) ensured the equitable distribution of the funds held in Basra's treasury among the soldiers. Each individual, including himself, received an equal share of 500 coins. However, a person approached and stated that his name was left out in the list of deserving soldiers. The Imam immediately gave his own share to the individual, expressing, "Praise to God who gave nothing from this money to me and provided it to Muslims."[3]

Casualties of the War

It's impossible to state the exact number of casualties from the Battle of the Camel with certainty, as historical sources provide varying, and sometimes exaggerated, figures for losses on both sides.[4] Based on historical evidence and considering the troop numbers, the account by Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ (d. 240/854), seems to be closer to reality. He estimated the casualties for Imam Ali's army to be between 400 and 500, while the losses for the Army of the Camel were around 2,500.[5]

The Appointment of ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās's as Governor of Basra

After the Battle of Jamal came to an end, Imam ʿAlī (a) remained in Basra for a period of 15 nights.[6] Prior to his departure from Basra, Imam ʿAlī (a) appointed ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās as the governor of the region. He imparted valuable advice to Ibn ʿAbbās, saying, "I urge you to maintain piety and justice in exercising the authority bestowed upon you by God. Interact with the people with generosity, knowledge, and wisdom. I caution you against harboring animosity, as it hardens the heart and undermines the truth. Be aware that drawing closer to God distances you from the fires of hell, while proximity to the fires of hell distances you from God. Remember God and do not be among the ignorant."[7] Following this, Imam ʿAlī (a) addressed the people in a sermon, stating: "O people! I have chosen Ibn ʿAbbās as my representative among you. Obey him as long as he remains

1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 538.
2. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 285-86.
3. Ibid., 402; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 250.
4. For more information, see Rayshhrī, *Mawsūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib* (*a*), 5: 79-81.
5. Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 186; see also Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 439.
6. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 33.
7. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 105-6.

obedient to God and the Prophet (s). However, if he deviates from the path of truth, inform me so that I can remove him from his position. I hope that he will maintain his purity, piety, and God-wariness. It is with confidence in him that I have made this appointment."[1]

Relocation of the Caliphate Center to Kufa

Due to Kufa's strategic location at the center of Islamic territories and its proximity to Iran with its abundant human and economic resources, Imam ʿAlī (a) decided to relocate the center of his caliphate to Kufa. This move was also driven by the Kufan people's inclination towards him, the need for better control over the Islamic territories, and the imperative to counter Muʿāwiya and potential future uprisings, such as those originating from the people of Jamal and Basra.[2]

The Imam's Arrival in Kufa

On Rajab 12, 36/January 4, 657, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) made his arrival in Kufa.[3] Instead of residing in the governor's palace,[4] Imam ʿAlī (a) chose to stay in the al-Raḥba neighborhood, specifically in the house of Jaʿda b. Hubayra.[5] Under the influence of ʿĀ'isha's letters and Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī's passive policies, some of the noblemen of Kufa had refused to accompany Imam ʿAlī (a) in the Battle of Jamal. However, upon Imam ʿAlī's relocation to Kufa, some of them, including Sulaymān b. Ṣurad al-Khuzāʿī and Saʿīd b. Qays, visited the Imam to welcome him. During their visit, Imam ʿAlī (a) delivered a speech in which he criticized them for their failure to accompany him earlier in the battle.[6]

In the mosque, after performing two rakʿas of prayer, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) delivered a sermon. He began by praising God and showing reverence to the Prophet (s), and then discussed this transient world and the hereafter. Imam ʿAlī (a) discouraged people from succumbing to personal desires, misguidance, and hypocrisy, urging them instead to embrace piety and follow his leadership, reproaching those who had disobeyed him. In response to an objection raised by Abū Burda al-Azdī regarding his conflict with the people of Jamal, Imam ʿAlī (a) clarified that the fight had arisen due to their breach of

1. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 420-21.
2. Murtaḍā ʿĀmilī, and Riḍāyī, "'Ilal-i taghyīr-i markaz-i khilāfat az Madīna bi Kūfa dar ʿaṣr-i zimām-dārī-yi Imām ʿAlī (a)," 52-54.
3. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 3.
4. A dedicated palace where an "amīr" or ruler resides.
5. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 5.
6. Ibid., 6-8.

allegiance, as well as their role in the killings of many supporters of his government in Basra, without handing over the perpetrators.[1] Once settled in Kufa, Imam ʿAlī (a) began dispatching his appointed rulers to various regions. Among them, Mālik al-Ashtar was assigned as the governor, entrusted with overseeing Mosul, Nusaybin, Dara, Sinjar, Amed (present-day Diyarbakır), Meyafarikîn (present-day Silvan), Hit, and al-ʿĀnāt.[2] He successfully quelled the supporters of ʿUthmān and Muʿāwiya in those areas.[3]

ʿAlī's Reforms in Kufa

Upon his arrival in Kufa, Imam ʿAlī (a) initiated various reforms and implemented necessary measures. He focused on restructuring the social composition of tribal settlements (known as *al-asbāʿ*) and recognizing the significance of agriculture in the city, he implemented measures to enhance agricultural conditions. Additionally, he established a dedicated military force known as the *Shurṭat al-Khamīs*, which played a crucial role in improving security conditions. Furthermore, he prioritized advancements in education, personally supervised economic conditions, and oversaw the functioning of markets. Some studies suggest that the first Islamic coin was minted during this period.

Changing the *al-Asbāʿ* System: Kufa was established in 17/638 as a military base during the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. During the city's construction, the settlements of different tribes were determined based on the central location of the Mosque of Kufa, as well as their tribal system and military capabilities. The division was primarily based on two main races, namely Yemen and Hijaz, with areas allocated for tribal settlements regardless of their populations. For instance, Yemeni tribes, with a population of 12,000, were settled to the east of the Mosque of Kufa, while Hijazi Nazārī tribes, with a population of 8,000, were settled to the west of the mosque.[4]

Cultural disparities and imbalanced population growth among the tribes settled in *al-Asbāʿ* resulted in numerous challenges for the residents. The lack of urban development aligned with the evolving needs of society further compounded problems for new migrants to Kufa. Additionally, the city's construction prioritized the establishment of roads and pathways over the proper development of neighborhoods and settlements, disregarding the population growth of the tribes. Consequently, this posed significant difficulties for the city's new inhabitants, particularly due to the rapid

1. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 491-92.
2. Areas in northern Iraq.
3. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 153-54.
4. See Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 270-72.

population increase in Kufa.[1] Following ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a)'s arrival in Kufa, significant changes were made to the social composition of *al-Asbāʿ*. The system was restructured in accordance with the population of each tribe and their cultural circumstances.[2]

Agriculture in Kufa: In the Hijaz region, agriculture was not widespread due to limited water resources. While certain areas of the Arabian Peninsula had agricultural practices where water availability permitted, the majority of Hijaz inhabitants had limited experience in farming.[3] Such limited experience and knowledge was evident during the conquest of Iraq. When ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb planned to distribute the conquered lands of Iraq among the conquerors based on people's recommendations, Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī (a) intervened and dissuaded him from doing so. He argued that the people of the Hijaz were not well-versed in agriculture and suggested entrusting the lands to Iraqi farmers instead. His rationale was to allow them to cultivate and develop the lands, ensuring their prosperity for future generations.[4] Given Kufa's prominent status as an agricultural center in Iraq,[5] the issue of agriculture held great importance for Imam ʿAlī (a). When urging people to engage in farming, he emphasized, "Whoever discovers water and fertile soil yet remains impoverished, God will distance him [from Himself]."[6] In his letters to his appointed governors, ʿAlī (a) urged them towards the prosperity and development of cities.[7] In a letter addressed to Qaraẓa b. Kaʿb al-Anṣārī, ʿAlī (a) wrote, "I have been informed by the individuals among the Dhimmis [non-Muslim minorities] under your authority that a creek in their lands has dried up and become buried beneath the ground. This creek played a crucial role in [supporting agriculture and] ensuring the well-being of the Muslims. Therefore, I urge you to consider their predicament and initiate the necessary measures to excavate and restore the creek [providing them with a water supply]. I solemnly swear that if they can live in prosperity, it would be more beneficial for us than if they were to migrate, even if they fall short of developing the city."[8]

Personal oversight of market conditions: Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) took personal interest in monitoring the state of the markets. He would visit the marketplaces and offer

1. See Juʿayyiṭ, *al-Kūfa*, 183-86.
2. See Massignon, *Khiṭaṭ al-Kūfa*, 21-24.
3. ʿAlī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, 7: 6-7.
4. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 151-52.
5. See Zubaydī, *al-Ḥayāt al-ijtimāʿiyya wa l-iqtiṣādiyya fī l-Kūfa*, 141-43.
6. Ḥimyarī, *Qurb al-isnād*, 115.
7. Ibn Suʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 126.
8. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 203.

guidance to the sellers, expressing: "Treat with kindness and keep prices low for Muslims, as this would bring about greater blessings."[1] According to an account transmitted from Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) visited and inspected all guilds in Kufa. In a commanding voice, he forbade them from engaging in fraudulent practices in transactions, setting excessively high prices, and swearing oaths during transactions.[2] In another account transmitted by Imam al-Bāqir (a), it is narrated that ʿAlī (a) visited the marketplace in Kufa. With a resonant voice that reached everyone present, he addressed the crowd, saying, "Make seeking goodness [from God] your priority, and do not engage in unfair practices in buying and selling in order to seek blessings. Show empathy towards your customers and exercise patience. Refrain from swearing oaths and speaking falsehoods. Avoid acts of injustice and treat the underprivileged with fairness. Reject usury, uphold proper weights and measures, refrain from using fraudulent measures, and do not spread corruption on Earth."[3]

Concern for the Underprivileged Classes of Society: During his time in Kufa, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) came across an elderly blind man who was begging. Intrigued, ʿAlī (a) inquired about the man and was informed, "O Amīr al-Muʾminīn! He is a Christian." The Imam (a) responded, "You made him work until he reached old age, and now you refuse to assist him? Allocate a portion from the treasury to support him."[4] This story highlights Imam ʿAlī's compassion for the underprivileged classes of society, a sentiment that is also evident in his letter to Mālik al-Ashtar.[5] In a letter addressed to one of his agents, Imam ʿAlī (a) underscores this very point and writes: "Keep an eye on goods belonging to God that have accumulated in your jurisdiction, disburse them among the destitute and the starving in your land, those who are beset with poverty and need."[6]

Mintage of the First Islamic Coin: Money holds a crucial role in an economic system. In Islamic society, Muslims conducted transactions using Sassanid and Byzantine coins, which featured the portraits of Persian or Roman kings.[7] According to historical sources, the mintage of the first Islamic coin is attributed to ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān (r. 65-86/685-705). It is documented that he issued the order for coin minting in 76/695-96.[8]

1. Zamakhsharī, *Rabīʿ al-abrār*, 5: 95.
2. Ibn al-Ashʿath, *al-Jaʿfariyyāt*, 238-39.
3. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 5: 151.
4. Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, 6: 293.
5. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 53.
6. Ibid., letter 67.
7. See Bates, "History, Geography and Numismatics in the First Century of Islamic Coinage."
8. Daynawarī, *Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 316.

However, according to certain studies, it appears that the first Islamic coin was minted during the caliphate of Imam ʿAlī (a) in 40/660. The edges of this coin were inscribed with the words, "In the Name of God, this coin was minted in Basra in 40."[1] Henri Lavoix, a French Orientalist, has published a picture of this coin depicting the inscribed text on its edges.[2]

Establishment of *Shurṭat al-Khamīs*: The significance of security is evident in the words of Imam ʿAlī (a). In a hadith, he emphasizes, "The worst of towns is where security is lacking."[3] With the aim of ensuring security, ʿAlī (a) established a military force known as *Shurṭat al-Khamīs* or the Elite Guard. Its members pledged unwavering loyalty to Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), and in return, he assured them of paradise.[4] Their primary responsibility was to uphold and safeguard order and security.[5] According to certain reports, their total number reached 6,000.[6]

The Issue of Education: Amīr al-Muʾminīn's words exemplify his deep concern for education. In a sermon addressing the reciprocal rights of the ruler and the people, he proclaimed, "You have rights over me … I owe you sincere counsel, generous stipends, teaching that dispels ignorance, and lessons that make you better."[7] According to a hadith from ʿAlī (a), "it is the duty of the leader to impart knowledge about the boundaries of Islam and faith to those under his authority."[8] Furthermore, emphasizing the importance of education, he stated, "Verily, people are in greater need of good manners than they are in need of gold and silver."[9]

ʿAlī (a) actively engaged in imparting general knowledge to the people. After offering the morning prayer, he would engage in *nāfila* or recommended prayers until sunrise. Subsequently, he would meet with the destitute, homeless, and others seeking knowledge, whom Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) would educate on Islamic rulings and the teachings of the Quran.[10] On another account, when Imam ʿAlī (a) was not occupied with

1. Daftar al-Qaysī, "Awwal Dirham ʿArabī sukka fī ʿahdi Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī (a) bi l-Baṣra."
2. Lavoix, *Catalogue des Monnaies Musulmanes de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, 58, PL II.
3. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, 409.
4. Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 2.
5. Ṣafarī Furūshānī, and Mīrzāyī, "Bāz-shināsī-yi mafhūmī-yi Shurṭat al-Khamīs dar zmān-i ḥukūmat-i Imām ʿAlī (a)," 73.
6. Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 2.
7. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 34.
8. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, 453.
9. Ibid., 237.
10. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 4: 109.

military campaigns, he dedicated his time to teaching people and resolving their legal disputes.[1]

Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) was committed to promoting general education. For instance, when someone inquired about the essence of true faith, he responded, "Come back tomorrow and I will inform you when others are present to hear me. Then, if you forget my words, others will remember them."[2] This commitment is also evident in his correspondence with his agents. In a letter addressed to Qutham b. ʿAbbās, his representative during the Hajj pilgrimage, ʿAlī (a) wrote, "Lead the hajj among the people and remind them to revere these, God's special days. Hold audience every morning and evening, and explain legal rulings to the inquirer, teach the ignorant, and discourse with the knowledgeable."[3]

Imam ʿAlī's Impact on the Compilation of Islamic Sciences: Amīr al-Muʾminīn's dedication extended beyond general education in Kufa. He also focused on compiling and organizing various Islamic sciences and disciplines. To illustrate, there is an account where Abū l-Aswad al-Duʾalī approached Imam ʿAlī (a) in Basra and found him deep in thought. He asked the Imam, "O Amīr al-Muʾminīn! What is occupying your mind?" The Imam (a) replied, "I have noticed incorrect usage of Arabic language in your region. I am contemplating writing a text on the rules of Arabic grammar." Abū l-Aswad responded, "If you do so, you will revive us and ensure the preservation of this language among us." Three days later, Imam ʿAlī (a) presented Abū l-Aswad al-Duʾalī with papers containing the rules of Arabic grammar. Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) instructed Abū l-Aswad, saying, "Review what I have written and add anything that comes to your mind."[4] In this manner, Imam ʿAlī (a) played a crucial role in establishing the field of Arabic grammar as a discipline.[5]

Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd (d. 656/1258) writes about Amīr al-Muʾminīn's contribution to the establishment of divine sciences: "You are well aware that the most noble sciences are the divine sciences, as the superiority of sciences is derived from the nobility of their subject matter. Since the subject matter of divine sciences encompasses the most noble of all beings, these sciences are considered the best. They were derived and transmitted from the words of ʿAlī (a). The origin of divine knowledge can be traced back to him, as

1. Daylamī, *Irshād al-qulūb*, 2: 218.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 272.
3. Ibid., letter 67.
4. Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-Khulafāʾ*, 214.
5. Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 59.

it began with him." Furthermore, he alludes to the role of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) in founding the sciences of Quranic exegesis and Arabic syntax or grammar.[1]

Abbas Mahmoud al-Aqqad (d. 1964), an Egyptian author, literary figure, and journalist, held the belief that Imam ʿAlī (a) played a significant role in the establishment and compilation of various sciences, including Islamic jurisprudence, theology, Arabic grammar, Arabic literature, and Arabic rhetoric.[2] George Jordac (d. 2014) highlights the cultural significance of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), stating, "ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) possessed unparalleled rationality and wisdom, making him a central figure in Arabic and Islamic teachings. There is no field of Arabic knowledge that he did not establish or at least make significant contributions to."[3]

For a considerable period of time, the Shia community has been devoted to compiling and documenting the teachings of ʿAlī (a) across various fields, including Quranic exegesis, Islamic jurisprudence, Arabic literature, and history. As a result, numerous works have been produced in these disciplines by Shia scholars.[4] Furthermore, some researchers have acknowledged the significant role of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) in Islamic culture and civilization. By studying the words and hadiths attributed to him, they have explored his influence in shaping Islamic civilization. These scholars assert that Imam ʿAlī's fundamental statements have captured the attention of Shias, prompting them to engage in the compilation of disciplines such as Quranic exegesis, hadith, philosophy, theology, history, and ethics.[5]

Unrest in the Sijistān (Sistan) Region

In the year 36/656,[6] a band of Arab invaders pillaged the Sistan region, plundering the belongings of its inhabitants. In response, ʿAlī (a) ordered ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Juzʾ al-Ṭāʾī to confront them, but he lost his life in the battle. Following that, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, the governor of Basra, dispatched an army to the area and successfully defeated the invaders.[7] Following the conflicts, certain members of the Kufan army expressed their sentiments through poetry.[8] These poems suggest that the raiders had motives beyond

1. See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 17-20.
2. See ʿAqqād, *ʿAbqariyyat al-Imām ʿAlī*, 113-22.
3. Jordac, *al-Imām ʿAlī (a)*, 111.
4. See e.g., Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 241.
5. See Kāshifī, "Taʾthir-i Imām ʿAlī (a) bar Farhang wa Tamddun-i Islāmī."
6. Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 182.
7. Ibid., 199.
8. Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 383.

mere plundering. Their actions were driven by a desire for vengeance for ʿUthmān and opposition to Amīr al-Muʾminīn's caliphate.

ʿAqīl's Request for a Larger Share of the Treasury

During that period, ʿAqīl b. Abī Ṭālib, the brother of ʿAlī (a), approached the Imam seeking financial assistance from the treasury.[1] In a sermon, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) recounts the story:

> "By God! I would prefer to lie on a bed of three-pronged Saʿdān thorns and be dragged along the ground in iron fetters than to meet God and his Messenger on the day of resurrection having oppressed any of his servants or having usurped any part of any person's property! How could I oppress someone to benefit a body that is part of a caravan speeding toward decay, which will long reside inside the belly of the earth! By God! I saw ʿAqīl, in his dire poverty, begging me for a measure of wheat from the treasury … He implored, he insisted, he entreated over and over, and since I listened, he assumed I would sell out my religion. He thought I'd be led by his rope and step off my path. I wanted him to understand. I heated an iron bar and brought it close to his body, and he screamed in pain, as if stabbed by the pangs of an excruciating illness. 'May your women mourn you, ʿAqīl!' I cried, 'How do you bawl so from the pain inflicted by an iron that a human has carelessly heated, while you drag me into the Fire of Wrath stoked by the All-Powerful Lord? How is it that you scream from this small injury and think I should not scream from the flames of hell?'"[2]

According to certain sources, when ʿAlī (a) declined to fulfill ʿAqīl b. Abī Ṭālib's request, ʿAqīl turned to Muʿāwiya for assistance.[3] There are uncertainties surrounding the claim that ʿAqīl abandoned his brother for material gain and sided with Muʿāwiya. Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233) states, "[The Quraysh] held animosity towards [ʿAqīl] due to his exposure of their vices. Consequently, they spread false accusations against him, portraying him as unintelligent and fabricating falsehoods about him."[4] Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd refutes this accusation and, based on the evidence available, he argues that ʿAqīl approached Muʿāwiya after the martyrdom of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a).[5]

1. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 101.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 224.
3. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 101.
4. Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 3: 561.
5. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 11: 251.

ʿAlī (a) and Muʿāwiya

Before delving into the events that transpired between Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) and Muʿāwiya, it is essential to provide a brief overview of Muʿāwiya's life and background during the Prophetic era and reigns of the early caliphs.

Muʿāwiya: From the Prophetic Era to ʿAlī's Caliphate

His name is Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān (Ṣakhr) b. Ḥarb b. Umayya b. ʿAbd Shams b. ʿAbd Manāf b. Quṣayy b. Kilāb.[1] His mother was Hind bt. ʿUtba b. Rabīʿa. In the Battle of Uḥud, she infamously ordered the mutilation of the corpse of Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, the uncle of the Prophet Muḥammad (s), and even took a part of his liver and chewed on it. As a result, she acquired the epithet "liver-eater" (*ākilat al-akbād*).[2] Muʿāwiya's father, Abū Sufyān, was a staunch opponent of Islam and the Prophet (s) during the early stages of the Islamic Prophetic mission. Muʿāwiya himself passed away in Damascus in the year 60/680.[3] Considering that Muʿāwiya passed away at the age of 77,[4] it is speculated that he was born approximately five years prior to the commencement of Muhammad's Prophetic mission, which would place his birth around the year 605.

During the Prophetic Era

Muʿāwiya, along with his father, mother, and brother, embraced Islam following the Conquest of Mecca. They were among the individuals categorized as *Muʾallafatu Qulubuhim*.[5] There is a paucity of information about Muʿāwiya's life during the Prophetic era. However, it is known that he was counted among the literate individuals of the Quraysh. In certain accounts, he is described as a scribe of the Prophet (s)[6] or a scribe of revelations.[7] There are reports suggesting that there were instances where the Prophet (s) expressed discontent towards Muʿāwiya or invoked a curse upon him. In one account, the Prophet (s) asked Muʿāwiya to come and write a letter for him, but Muʿāwiya declined, citing his engagement in consuming a meal. In response, the Prophet (s)

1. Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām*, 3: 119-20.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 4: 287.
3. Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, 28: 179.
4. Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām*, 3: 162.
5. Ibn ʿAbd al-Birrm, *al-Istīʿāb*, 3: 1416; Maqrīzī, *al-Nizāʿ wa l-takhāṣum*, 56. *Muʾallafatu qulubuhim* (lit. those whose hearts are brought together) refers to a portion of zakat designated as financial and economic support for new Muslims or those whose faith has not yet firmly taken root. This allocation is intended to draw their hearts closer to Islam.
6. Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 4: 433.
7. Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām*, 3: 123.

invoked a curse, saying, "May God never fill his stomach."[1] According to reports, following the incident, Muʿāwiya was said to have consumed several meals each day, yet his stomach was never satisfied or filled.[2]

During the Caliphs' Era

During the caliphate of Abū Bakr, Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān, who was Muʿāwiya's brother, held the position of commander for the conquests in the Levant region. Muʿāwiya participated in those conquests under the leadership of his brother.[3] During the caliphate of ʿUmar, following the death of Yazīd due to a plague in the year 18/639, ʿUmar appointed Muʿāwiya as the ruler of the Levant region.[4] Muʿāwiya received complete support from the caliph and was entrusted with both military leadership and the administration of taxation in the Levant region.[5] As a result of his influential position and the support he received, Muʿāwiya gradually established himself as the uncontested ruler of the Levant region. This significant political power he attained in the area, along with his autonomy in decision-making, potentially laid the groundwork for his bid for assumption of the caliphate position, as suggested by some reports.[6]

In our previous account of the events during ʿUthmān's period, we mentioned that Muʿāwiya also had the complete support of the third caliph. During that time, Muʿāwiya had transformed the Levant into a safe place for ʿUthmān, as the caliph exiled several of his opponents and dissidents, including individuals like Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī and certain Quranic reciters (*Qurrāʾ*) from Kufa, to the Levant.[7] Early on, when riots against ʿUthmān began to emerge, Muʿāwiya proposed to ʿUthmān the idea of relocating to the Levant as a means of seeking safety. However, the caliph rejected this proposal.[8] As the protests intensified, Muʿāwiya delayed offering his support and assistance to the caliph. When Muʿāwiya met the caliph without bringing his army, the caliph expressed his frustration, saying, "May God not reward you with goodness! It is because of you that I will meet my

1. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4: 2010.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 532; Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmāʿ*, 4: 399. Some sources have provided interpretations and explanations alongside these reports to mitigate the intensity of the criticism (See e.g., Ṭayālisī, *Musnad*, 4: 464; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 8: 119).
3. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 7: 284-85.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 11.
5. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 62.
6. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 59: 123.
7. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 4: 229.
8. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 3: 187.

demise."[1] It appears that Muʿāwiya viewed the assassination of the caliph as an opportunity for himself to attain the position of caliphate, and therefore he made no significant efforts to defend ʿUthmān.

What is significant about Muʿāwiya's unchallenged rule over the Levant during the eras of ʿUmar and ʿUthmān is the notable cultural influence he exerted on the people of that region. Exploiting their relative distance from the center of the caliphate in Medina and their limited knowledge, Muʿāwiya imposed a cultural restriction to introduce his own interpretation of Islam. He restricted the movement of hadith narrators from other regions into the Levant, imposed limitations on the transmission and recording of Prophetic hadiths, and instead promoted alternative forms of storytelling and arts. This created an environment that facilitated the infiltration of fabricated hadiths into the Islamic heritage. Additionally, after the assassination of ʿUthmān, Muʿāwiya crafted a mythical and legendary image of ʿUthmān's character among the people of the Levant. By exploiting the emotions stirred by this portrayal and capitalizing on claims of seeking vengeance for the slain caliph, he united the Levantine population against the government of ʿAlī (a). Furthermore, Muʿāwiya effectively utilized the materialistic tendencies of the Levantine people by providing them with substantial financial resources, thereby subjecting them to his authority.[2]

In one of his sermons, Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a) alludes to these events and remarks: "Muʿāwiya leads a band of fools and imbeciles. By muddying reports of what happened, he has deceived them into exposing their throats to fate's arrows."[3] This psychological manipulation extended to the extent that the people in the Levant came to recognize the Banū Umayya as the rightful heirs of the Prophet (s) and his true successors. When certain Levantine jurists later visited the Abbasid caliphs, they expressed that, prior to that time, they had acknowledged no successors to the Prophet (s) other than the Banū Umayya.[4]

Despite Muʿāwiya's claim that his primary motivation for opposing ʿAlī (a) was seeking vengeance for ʿUthmān and restoring the council-based caliphate established by ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb,[5] his true motivations were revealed when he eventually assumed

1. Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 3: 450.

2. See Zaḥmatkish, and Mūsawī, "Muqāyisa-yi taṭbīqī-yi shīwa-hāyi tablīghī-yi Payāmbar (s) dar daʿwat bi Islām bā siyāsat-hāyi tablīghī-yi Muʿāwiya dar Shām," 87-90.

3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 51.

4. See Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 4: 159-60; see also Sharon, "The Umayyads as Ahl Al-Bayt."

5. In a letter addressed to the people of Mecca and Medina, Muʿāwiya underscored this motivation (Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 118-19). Furthermore, he sought the allegiance of the Levantine people by proposing that

the caliphate position after ʿAlī's martyrdom and the events leading to a peace treaty with Imam al-Ḥasan (a). In the first sermon he delivered in Medina, he explicitly declared, "I swear by God that I did not attain this position due to your love for me or your approval of it, but I fought against you with the sword to secure this position." He made it clear that he would not govern following the methods of Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān. Instead, he intended to implement a new approach that prioritized his own and the people's interests, ensuring that they would attain their desires in this worldly life.[1] Furthermore, when addressing the people of Kufa, he openly stated that his fight was not to establish the traditions of the Prophet (s) and Islamic rulings, but rather to assert his rule and dominance over them.[2]

In contrast to the method of the Prophet (s), Muʿāwiya transformed the government into a political system resembling that of monarchs and kings. The caliphate transitioned into a hereditary monarchy, evident in his selection of his son Yazīd as his crown prince and his insistence on Muslims pledging allegiance to him.[3] To solidify his government, Muʿāwiya propagated the concept of determinism or predestination, which later became an intellectual framework embraced by the Umayyad government in the post-Muʿāwiya era.[4] In one of his general sermons, he proclaimed, "The earth [and its wealth] belongs to God, and I am His representative [on Earth]. Therefore, whatever I acquire is rightfully mine, and whatever I bestow upon others is an act of my benevolence."[5] During Muʿāwiya's era, many rulings were enacted that directly contradicted the traditions of the Prophet (s) and Islamic teachings. This included the legalization of usury and the sale of wine, both of which are explicitly prohibited in Islam.[6]

Muʿāwiya's Declaration of Avenging ʿUthmān's Blood

In conjunction with the uprising of the army of Jamal against Imam ʿAlī (a) and the ensuing war, it is believed that Muʿāwiya took advantage of the situation by ascending the *minbar* (pulpit) and advocating for vengeance on behalf of ʿUthmān. This tactic secured the allegiance of the people to him.[7] Following consultations with his trusted

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the caliphate should be determined through a council. He also emphasized the necessity of avenging ʿUthmān's blood and ensuring retributive execution for his killers (Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 300).

1. Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, 4: 171.
2. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 16: 15.
3. See ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, 1: 64.
4. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī*, 8: 4; see also ʿAṭwān, *al-Firaq al-Islāmiyya fī bilād al-Shām*, 206-7.
5. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 20.
6. See Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 26: 197, 199.
7. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 32.

companions, notably his brother ʿUtba, Muʿāwiya selected ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ as his partner and advisor. ʿUtba b. Abī Sufyān recognized that since ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ had distanced himself from the events surrounding the assassination of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, the most effective approach to win his cooperation would be to make enticing promises, considering his remarkable intelligence.[1]

Nāʾila bt. al-Farāfiṣa, the wife of ʿUthmān who had suffered the loss of some of her fingers during her husband's assassination, penned a letter to Muʿāwiya in which she recounted the details of the caliph's murder. Accompanying the letter, she sent ʿUthmān's bloodstained garment as well as her own severed fingers as evidence of the brutal incident.[2] Recognizing this as the prime opportunity to fulfill his long-held desire for governance over Islamic territories, Muʿāwiya displayed ʿUthmān's bloodstained garment and Nāʾila's severed fingers on the *minbar*, while passionately calling for retribution for ʿUthmān's murder. Through this act, he successfully stirred up the people of the Levant against Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī (a).[3]

In his pursuit of power and to bolster his claim to the caliphate, Muʿāwiya proposed marriage to ʿUthmān's widowed wife. However, Nāʾila firmly rejected his advances. It is possible that Muʿāwiya sought to legitimize his vengeance for ʿUthmān's blood by marrying his widow. Despite Nāʾila's refusal, Muʿāwiya persisted so relentlessly in his marriage proposal that she ultimately resorted to removing her front teeth as a drastic measure to dissuade him. This tactic proved successful, as Muʿāwiya ceased his pursuit of marrying her.[4]

Messages from Some Kufans to Muʿāwiya

During this period, messages of support were dispatched to Muʿāwiya from individuals in Kufa who held animosity towards Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) for various reasons. One of these individuals was al-Walīd b. ʿUqba. Upon learning that Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) had written a letter to Muʿāwiya proposing a peaceful resolution and stepping aside from ruling over the Levant, al-Walīd sent a message to Muʿāwiya discouraging him from accepting ʿAlī's suggestion. Furthermore, he urged Muʿāwiya to engage in combat against ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a).[5]

1. Ibid., 33.
2. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 64.
3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 562.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ahsrāf*, 5: 497.
5. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 496.

Among the reasons behind al-Walīd's opposition to Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), the following motivations can be highlighted: As we previously mentioned in our account of the events during ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān's caliphate, al-Walīd b. ʿUqba, who was appointed as the governor of Kufa by ʿUthmān, had led congregational prayers in the mosque while being intoxicated by wine, and subsequently vomited in the mihrab (prayer niche) of the mosque.[1] When Imam ʿAlī (a) insisted on personally administering the punishment for wine-drinking to al-Walīd, the latter was deeply saddened and lodged a complaint with the Prophet (s). It was during this period that the following verse was revealed: "Is someone who is faithful like someone who is a transgressor? They are not equal" (Q 32:18). The "transgressor" mentioned in this verse refers to al-Walīd b. ʿUqba. Ḥassān b. Thābit composed a poem addressing this situation, which further intensified al-Walīd's frustration.[2]

Imam ʿAlī's Attempt to Remove Muʿāwiya from His Position

As mentioned earlier, in the early stages of his caliphate, Imam ʿAlī (a) dispatched an envoy to Muʿāwiya, urging him to call upon the people of the Levant to pledge their allegiance to ʿAlī (a) and step aside from ruling over the region. However, after a long period of time, Muʿāwiya responded by sending a blank letter back to Imam ʿAlī (a). The envoy of ʿAlī (a) reported that the people of the Levant, influenced by Muʿāwiya's propaganda, believed that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) was responsible for the assassination of ʿUthmān. Consequently, they were unwilling to settle down unless they sought retribution for the blood of the former caliph.[3] During that period, Imam ʿAlī (a) had intentions to mobilize his army towards the Levant. However, his plans were postponed due to the unfolding events of the Battle of Jamal.[4]

Following the end of the Battle of Jamal, Imam ʿAlī (a) was resolute in confronting Muʿāwiya. Aware of Muʿāwiya's opposition, Imam ʿAlī (a) addressed the people in a sermon, stating: "Muʿāwiya has instigated doubts among the people of the Levant, turned their hearts against me, and spread rumors that ʿUthmān was killed by my hand. I am considering writing a letter to him to advise and counsel him, hoping it may have an impact and change his mind. What are your thoughts?" His companions responded, saying, "O Amīr al-Muʾminīn! Do as you see fit and command us; we will obey you.

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 165.
2. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 295-96.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 211-12.
4. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 74.

Obeying you is akin to obeying the Prophet (s)."[1] Therefore, ʿAlī (a) composed a letter addressed to Muʿāwiya.

Jarīr b. ʿAbd Allāh Dispatched to Muʿāwiya

When ʿAlī (a) consulted with his companions and expressed his desire to send an envoy to Muʿāwiya, Jarīr b. ʿAbd Allāh volunteered, considering the close friendship he shared with Muʿāwiya. Although Mālik al-Ashtar opposed the idea, ʿAlī (a) agreed to dispatch Jarīr, relying on their friendship and hoping for a favorable outcome.[2] The letter he sent read as follows: "The same people who pledged allegiance to Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān pledged allegiance to me, and they did so on the same basis. Those who were present did not have the right to choose, and those absent did not have the right to object. Consultation is reserved for the Emigrants and Allies alone." By refuting Muʿāwiya's accusation of ʿAlī's involvement in ʿUthmān's assassination, he urged him to pledge his allegiance and obedience.[3]

Upon receiving the letter, Muʿāwiya requested Jarīr for a brief period of time to consider it.[4] Using various pretexts, Muʿāwiya prolonged Jarīr's stay in Damascus, which led to people in Kufa accusing him of aligning with Muʿāwiya.[5] With the prolonged absence of Jarīr b. ʿAbd Allāh, ʿAlī's army urged him to initiate the conflict against Muʿāwiya. In response, the Imam stated, "If I prepared to battle the Syrians while Jarīr is still with them, I would close the door to reconciliation and eliminate the chance, were they to wish it, of a peaceful outcome. I have given Jarīr a limit for his return, which he should adhere to unless he is deceived or disobedient."[6]

On the contrary, Muʿāwiya instructed Jarīr to compose a letter to ʿAlī (a), requesting him to relinquish the governance of the Levant and Egypt to Muʿāwiya both during his lifetime and after his death. In reply, ʿAlī (a) firmly stated, "I never appoint the misguided as my deputies." In a letter addressed to Jarīr, ʿAlī (a) instructed him to either secure Muʿāwiya's allegiance or declare war to him and return promptly.[7]

Upon Jarīr's return to Kufa, rumors circulated about his alleged collaboration with Muʿāwiya. It was during this period that Mālik al-Ashtar, who had initially opposed Jarīr's

1. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 494-95.
2. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 184; Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 505-6.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 6; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 2: 113-14.
4. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 184.
5. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 55.
6. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 43.
7. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 115-16.

assignment to the Levant, criticized him and claimed that he was unfit for the mission, asserting his own competence for the task. In response to Mālik's remarks, Jarīr highlighted that if Mālik were to venture to the Levant, he would undoubtedly be executed on accusations of involvement in the assassination of ʿUthmān.[1] Following these events, and likely due to mounting rumors regarding his alleged cooperation with Muʿāwiya, Jarīr grew concerned for his safety and decided to depart from Kufa. After some time, he received an invitation from Muʿāwiya to join him in the Levant, and he accepted, aligning himself with Muʿāwiya.[2] Once again, ʿAlī (a) dispatched an envoy to Muʿāwiya. In his message directed to Muʿāwiya, ʿAlī (a) reiterated emphatically that he bore no role in the assassination of ʿUthmān.[3] However, in his response, Muʿāwiya asserted that ʿAlī (a) was indeed accountable for ʿUthmān's assassination, demanding that he surrender the perpetrators of the crime.[4]

The Correspondence between Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) and Muʿāwiya

The exchange of letters between Muʿāwiya and Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) extends beyond the aforementioned instances. Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd has compiled a selection of these correspondences in his *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*.[5] According to certain records, the exchange of letters between ʿAlī (a), Muʿāwiya, and ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ spanned a period of 17 months.[6]

In these correspondences, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) initially advised Muʿāwiya, reminding him of the importance of the hereafter. However, Muʿāwiya audaciously accused ʿAlī (a) of inciting sedition in his response. In a subsequent letter, the Imam (a) reminded Muʿāwiya of the historical envy harbored by his household, particularly Abū Sufyān and his allies, towards the Prophet (s), which had fueled their animosity. ʿAlī (a) warned Muʿāwiya about the consequences in the afterlife. In response, Muʿāwiya dismissed these words as a result of fear from direct confrontation and insisted on resorting to war. In the third letter, the Imam (a) expressed his astonishment at Muʿāwiya's stance and reminded him of the knowledge he possessed regarding the repercussions of his actions. He affirmed that the delay in engaging in war was in compliance with religious obligations, which Muʿāwiya denied. ʿAlī (a) prophesied a future in which Muʿāwiya would regret the

1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 59-60.
2. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 373.
3. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 64-65; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 104-5.
4. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 17: 253.
5. Ibid., 16: 133-36.
6. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 80.

war and seek peace, despite denying such intentions in his heart. In response, Muʿāwiya reiterated his accusations and accused the Imam (a) of deceiving the people of Kufa, claiming that they would abandon ʿAlī (a) once the truth became apparent. In the fourth letter, the Imam (a) referred to Muʿāwiya and his companions as supporters of the devil, asserting that the divine light would prevail despite their efforts, and they would witness the consequences of their actions. In his final letter to Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), Muʿāwiya invited him to engage in war.

One of Muʿāwiya's primary tactics to incite people against Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) was exploiting the desire for vengeance over ʿUthmān's blood. Despite his own role in delaying assistance for ʿUthmān,[1] Muʿāwiya manipulated people's emotions, aided by Nāʾila, ʿUthmān's wife, to fuel animosity among the people of the Levant against ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a). Muʿāwiya's letters to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) clearly reveal claims of seeking retribution for ʿUthmān's death and allegations of ʿAlī's involvement in the assassination.[2] Despite the Imam's consistent denial of these allegations in his letters to Muʿāwiya,[3] the latter's propaganda had a significant impact on the people of the Levant. Such was the extent of Muʿāwiya's influence that ʿAlī's envoy reported to him as follows: "I come from a people who believe that you are responsible for the killing of ʿUthmān, and they will not be satisfied until you are killed."[4]

Another tactic employed by Muʿāwiya to undermine Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) was to claim that only the people of Medina had pledged allegiance to the Imam. In a letter addressed to Imam ʿAlī (a), Muʿāwiya asserted that the people of the Levant had not given their allegiance to ʿAlī (a) and had never recognized his authority, suggesting that the Imam had no jurisdiction over them. Furthermore, Muʿāwiya himself had not pledged allegiance to ʿAlī (a) either.[5] In this manner, Muʿāwiya sought to challenge the legitimacy of Amīr al-Muʾminīn's caliphate. However, Imam ʿAlī (a) responded by asserting that no one believed that the people of the Levant could dictate the rule over the people of the Hijaz, and that a member of the Quraysh from the Levant deserved the position of caliphate. He further stated, "There was no distinction in that pledge of allegiance between the people of the Levant and the people of Basra, or between Ṭalḥa and al-

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 175.

2. Certain letters, cited in various sources, explicitly assert Muʿāwiya's desire for vengeance in the name of ʿUthmān (Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 277-78; Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil*, 1: 258; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 251-53).

3. Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil*, 1: 261.

4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 211-12.

5. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 121; Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil*, 1: 258.

Zubayr. It was a general pledge of allegiance that is unquestionable and cannot be revoked."[1] In a separate letter addressed to Muʿāwiya, as previously mentioned, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) affirmed, "Consultation is reserved for the Emigrants and Allies alone, and if they agree on someone and name him their leader, then that is God's will. Afterward, if a person secedes from the consensus with accusations and excuses, they should compel him to return. If he refuses, they should fight him, for he has strayed from the path of believers."[2]

It is important to note that the correspondences between Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) and Muʿāwiya were not mere private exchanges between two individuals, but rather served propaganda purposes and were likely intended for public consumption. It is suggested that "Muʿāwiya attempted to undermine the status of ʿAlī (a) and reminded him of the usurpation of his rightful [caliphate] by Abū Bakr and ʿUmar in his letters, aiming to provoke an angry reaction from ʿAlī against them [the previous caliphs] in order to further incite the people of the Levant against him [i.e., ʿAlī (a)]."[3]

Amīr al-Muʾminīn's Decision to Wage War against Muʿāwiya

Imam ʿAlī (a) firmly declined Muʿāwiya's requests and disregarded his words. After engaging in consultations with the Muhājirūn and Anṣar, as well as prominent figures such as Hāshim b. ʿUtba, ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, Qays b. Saʿd, Sahl b. Ḥunayf, and Mālik al-Ashtar, he made the decision to confront Muʿāwiya in battle.[4] In his letters to the appointed governors, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) issued orders for them to gather their respective armies and bring them to Kufa. Additionally, he corresponded with army commanders and tax collection agents.[5] Following this, in order to assemble enough forces to confront Muʿāwiya, ʿAlī (a) dispatched emissaries to the governors of Hamadan and Azerbaijan, instructing them to prepare their respective armies. Additionally, he summoned ʿAmr b. Abī Salama al-Makhzūmī, the son of Umm Salama, as well as the

1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 58; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 122.

2. Shrīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 6. It should be noted that these words of the Imam (a) are based on what Muʿāwiya believes, and this stance does not reflect the true position of the Imam (a) regarding the legitimacy of the caliphate. For instance, when Muʿāwiya referred to the Imam's (a) reluctance to pledge allegiance and emphasized that he was forced to do so (Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 278), the Imam replied, "you intended to revile but have offered praise instead, you intended to disgrace but are yourself disgraced! A Muslim is never shamed because he is a victim of oppression, as long as he does not doubt in his faith or falter in his certainty." (Shrīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 28). Imam ʿAlī (a), in this response, alluded to the fact that the caliphate was his rightful position and had been usurped from him.

3. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 15: 184-85.

4. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 92-102; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 109.

5. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 104-8; Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 543-44.

governor of Bahrain, to gather their forces and join him in Kufa.[1] Shortly thereafter, upon receiving al-Aḥnaf b. Qays's letter to his tribe, Tamīm clan, all the members of the tribe promptly gathered and pledged their unwavering support to ʿAlī (a).[2] Al-Aḥnaf b. Qays and the Tamīm tribe, had previously abstained from participating in the Battle of Jamal. However, upon joining forces with Imam ʿAlī's army in the face-off against Muʿāwiya, al-Aḥnaf expressed, "While my clan had reservations about [engaging in the confrontation with] Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, we harbor no doubts about standing against Muʿāwiya, and we are committed to fighting alongside you."[3]

After successfully gathering the army, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) wrote letters to both Muʿāwiya and ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, urging them to embrace the path of truth and renounce hostility. However, in response, they demanded the extradition of those responsible for the murder of ʿUthmān, as well as the transfer of the caliphate's authority to a council.[4] Subsequently, Imam ʿAlī (a) delivered a sermon, calling upon the people to engage in jihad. He reminded them of their solemn pledge of allegiance to him and expressed his astonishment that Muʿāwiya had audaciously laid claim to the position of caliphate and sought to wage war against them. In a notable portion of his sermon, he referred to Muʿāwiya and his supporters as the *al-Qāsiṭūn*.[5]

Muʿāwiya's Attempts to Garner Support from Prominent Figures

In another significant move, Muʿāwiya entered into a peace treaty with the Roman Empire.[6] He also sought to gain support from Shuraḥbīl b. al-Simṭ al-Kindī, a prominent companion of the Prophet (s) who resided in the Levant.[7] Leveraging the vengeance for ʿUthmān and delegation of the caliphate to a council, Muʿāwiya wrote letters to the people of Mecca and Medina, as well as to individuals such as ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar, Saʿd

1. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 157; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 201.
2. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 505.
3. Ibid., 2: 504-5.
4. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 108-11.
5. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 261-63. The term *al-qāsiṭūn* is derived from *al-qusūṭ*, which signifies deviation or straying from the path of truth (Farāhīdī, *K. al-ʿAyn*, 5: 71). In the Quran, the *al-Qāsiṭūn* (the perverse) are described as fuel for the fires of Hell (Q 72: 15). Additionally, according to various sources, albeit with variations in wording, there are hadiths in which the Prophet (s) prophesied or commanded ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) to confront the *al-Qāsiṭūn* in the future (See e.g., Fākihī, *Akhbār Makka*, 1: 470-72; Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 2: 215-16, 3: 26-27; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 4: 172, 10: 91; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 150; Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawāʾid*, 5: 196, 6: 235, 7: 238).
6. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 44; Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 377.
7. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 99-100; Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 159-60.

b. Abī Waqqāṣ, Muḥammad b. Maslama, and Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī. However, he received no favorable replies from them. [1]

In our account of the events of ʿUthmān's caliphate, we mentioned that after ʿUmar's assassination by Abū Luʾluʾa, his son ʿUbayd Allāh killed some individuals, including Hurmuzān and the young daughter of Abū Luʾluʾa. However, Uthman refused to punish ʿUbayd Allāh. However, Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī (a) publicly declared that he would execute ʿUbayd Allāh if he were to become the caliph. As a result, when people pledged their allegiance to ʿAlī (a), ʿUbayd Allāh felt threatened and ultimately aligned himself with Muʿāwiya.[2]

Muʿāwiya's Attempt to Garner Support from Ziyād b. Abīh

Ziyād b. Abīh[3] was appointed by Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) ʿAlī (a) as the governor of the Fars region. He proved to be successful in his administration, which caused concern for Muʿāwiya. In an attempt to win Ziyād's favor, Muʿāwiya wrote him a letter, encouraging him to join his side. Upon reading Muʿāwiya's letter, Ziyād b. Abīh delivered a sermon, addressing the people and stating, "It is truly strange that the son of the 'liver-eater'[4] would make promises to me, while standing between us is the Prophet's cousin [i.e., ʿAlī (a)], the Muhājirūn, and the Anṣār who have taken up arms against him ... I solemnly swear that if Amīr al-Muʾminīn permits me, he will find the son of the liver-eater in a place he despises."[5] Upon learning about Muʿāwiya's letter to Ziyād, ʿAlī (a) wrote a letter to his governor, stating, "I have appointed you as the governor in your current position because you are deserving of it. You will only be able to mamange what is under your authority through patience. Therefore, seek assistance from God, place your trust in Him, and remain cautious of Muʿāwiya's tricks."[6] Thus, Muʿāwiya's wishes went unfulfilled.

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1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 62-64, 71-77; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 118-21; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 187.
2. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 122-23.
3. Ziyād b. Abīh (literally, Ziyād the son of his father), also known as Ziyād b. Ummih (literally, Ziyād the son of his mother) or Ziyād b. Sumayya (his mother's name), was given these titles that implied his illegitimate birth. In certain sources, he is referred to as Ziyād b. ʿUbayd. According to this version, Ziyād's father was a servant who was later freed by his son. Ziyād served as a governor appointed by ʿAlī (a), but after the Imam's martyrdom, he aligned himself with Muʿāwiya. Following the martyrdom of Imam ʿAlī (a), Muʿāwiya organized a ceremony in which he publicly claimed that Ziyād was the result of an adulterous relationship between his mother and Abū Sufyān (Muʿāwiya's father). Consequently, Ziyād came to be known as Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān. Ziyād passed away in 53/673 (Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 2: 523-24).
4. This refers to Hind, Muʿāwiya's mother, because of her act of chewing Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib's liver after his martyrdom in the Battle of Uḥud.
5. This is a metaphorical way of referring to the military attack against Muʿāwiya.
6. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 4: 298-99.

Muʿāwiya's Attempt to Garner Support from Qays b. Saʿd

In Ṣafar, 36/August 656, after the assassination of Muḥammad b. Abī Ḥudhayfa, who served as Imam ʿAlī's governor in Egypt, by the agents of Muʿāwiya and ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, Imam ʿAlī (a) appointed Qays b. Saʿd as the new governor of Egypt. This appointment raised concerns for Muʿāwiya.[1] Upon his arrival in Egypt, Qays delivered a sermon in which he declared his authority on behalf of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), sought the allegiance of the people, and appointed representatives in various local areas. However, the people of Khirbita[2] and some prominent figures in Egypt, including Maslama b. Mudlij al-Anṣāri, refused to pledge allegiance and instead expressed their desire for vengeance for ʿUthmān. In a message to them, Qays assured that he would not force them to pledge allegiance and that they would be safe as long as they did not engage in any acts against him.[3]

As disputes between Kufa and the Levant escalated, Muʿāwiya found himself in a difficult situation. He realized that Qays b. Saʿd, the appointed governor of Egypt by Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), was not far from him. Muʿāwiya feared that he would have to fight on two fronts. In an attempt to win Qays's favor, Muʿāwiya wrote him a letter, urging him to repent for his alleged involvement in ʿUthmān's assassination. He accused ʿAlī (a) of inciting people to riot against ʿUthmān and asked Qays to seek vengeance for the slain caliph. Muʿāwiya even promised Qays that he would appoint him as the ruler of Iraq if he joined him. Reluctant to instigate a war with Muʿāwiya, Qays responded by firmly asserting that neither he nor ʿAlī (a) were involved in inciting violence against ʿUthmān. Regarding Muʿāwiya's offer, Qays wrote, "It should be contemplated as it is not something that could be rushed." Qays assured Muʿāwiya that no harm would come to him from Egypt. Upon reading Qays's reply, Muʿāwiya concluded that Qays was neither inclined towards him nor fully obedient to ʿAlī (a). He suspected that Qays had some sort of trick in mind. Muʿāwiya wrote a second letter to Qays, expressing his displeasure with the response. He stated, "I found you neither at peace with me nor as an enemy. No tricks can be played on a man with such a large army as mine." In this situation, Qays, no longer willing to tolerate Muʿāwiya's overtures, referred to him as a tyrant and disappointed him regarding his alignment with the Levant's front.[4]

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1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 546-47.
2. A region near Alexandria in Egypt (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 2: 355).
3. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 7: 251.
4. For further details about Qays's condition in Egypt and his correspondences with Muʿāwiya, see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 547-52.

When Muʿāwiya realized that he could not gain support from Qays, he resorted to a deceitful tactic. He delivered a sermon to the people, falsely declaring that Qays b. Saʿd, who served as ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib's governor in Egypt, had pledged allegiance to him. Muʿāwiya even went as far as fabricating a letter from Qays and reading it to the public. In the forged letter, Qays purportedly expressed his readiness to seek vengeance for the assassins of caliph ʿUthmān and promised to join Muʿāwiya with the wealth and people of Egypt. Rumors of Qays's allegiance to Muʿāwiya spread throughout the Levant and eventually reached Kufa, leading to suspicion and doubt among the people. When Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) consulted his companions about whether to retain Qays in his position or remove him, ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfr b. Abī Ṭālib suggested that Qays b. Saʿd be removed. He argued that Qays had failed to punish those who refused to pledge allegiance to him, leaving himself in a weak position. Furthermore, it was feared that those who did not pledge allegiance in Egypt would act against the interests of the Kufa government. Considering the circumstances, Imam ʿAlī (a) accepted the suggestion to remove Qays from his position.[1]

On one occasion, Muʿāwiya openly admitted to the people from the Quraysh, saying, "I have never played a trick as intriguing as the one I did with Qays ... [When] he refused to align with me, I instructed people not to speak ill of Qays b. Saʿd and not to provoke him, as he has a favorable disposition towards us and secretly provides us with wise advice. Just look at how he treats your brethren from Khirbita who are close to him. He ensures their stipends are paid, and he keeps them safe. Anyone among you who visits him will be treated kindly. I wanted to write this for my allies in Iraq so that ʿAlī's spies in the Levant and Iraq could hear it."[2]

The Governorship of Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr in Egypt

Finally, Imam ʿAlī (a) appointed Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr as the governor of Egypt.[3] When Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) dispatched Muḥammad to Egypt, he wrote a letter of covenant for him and offered advice. In the opening of the letter, ʿAlī (a) wrote, "Lower your wing over them, offer them your softer side, show them your face, and give equal attention to all in glance and look, such that the powerful are not emboldened to expect unfair favors and the weak do not despair of getting justice." Imam ʿAlī (a) then advised Muḥammad to uphold piety and asceticism, reminding him of the divine reckoning on the Day of

1. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 217-18.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 552.
3. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 219.

Resurrection. Moreover, he stressed the importance of not compromising his faith to seek the pleasure of anyone but God. Finally, ʿAlī (a) emphasized the significance of prayer and said, "Pray the ritual prayer at its appointed time. Do not pray it early just because you have time or delay it because you are occupied. Know that every single one of your duties is subordinate to prayer." In the closing part of the letter of covenant, Imam ʿAlī (a) warned Muḥammad about the tricks of hypocrites, saying, "They are not equal—an Imam who leads to guidance and an Imam who leads to perdition, a man who loves the Prophet (s) and a man who hates the Prophet (s). God's Messenger (s) said to me: 'I do not fear harm for my community from either believer or unbeliever. As for the believer, God holds him back because of his belief. As for the unbeliever, God thwarts him because of his unbelief. I fear harm for you from every man whose heart harbors hypocrisy while his tongue spouts knowledge, who says what you know to be good, but does what you know is evil'."[1]

Upon assuming his role as the governor of Egypt, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr wrote a letter to Muʿāwiya, reminding him of the bravery and virtues of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) and highlighting the historical hostility of Muʿāwiya's father, Abū Sufyān, and his allies towards Islam. Muḥammad called upon Muʿāwiya to obey Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a). In response, Muʿāwiya countered by stating that it was Muḥammad's own father, Abū Bakr, who had deprived ʿAlī (a) of the caliphate. Muʿāwiya asserted that Abū Bakr and his companions were more deserving of blame than himself.[2]

The March towards Ṣiffīn

Appointing ʿUqba b. ʿAmr al-Anṣāri as the temporary ruler of Kufa,[3] Imam ʿAlī (a) and a significant number of his supporters departed for the al-Nukhayla region[4] on Shawwāl 5, 36/March 27, 657.[5] The Imam (a) delivered a sermon, urging the people to lend their support to him in his journey to Ṣiffīn.[6] At that moment, a man voiced his opposition to ʿAlī (a), saying, "You want us to fight against our Levantine brothers, just as we went to Basra and caused much bloodshed." In response, a group of individuals from the Hamdān

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 27.
2. For the details of the correspondences between Muḥammad and Muʿāwiya, see Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 293-97. Interestingly, al-Ṭabarī did not include the texts of these letters in his account, as he believed that laypeople may not have the capacity to fully comprehend them (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 557).
3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 93.
4. An area near Kufa (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 5: 278).
5. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 374.
6. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 48; Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 131-33.

clan attacked and killed him. Imam ʿAlī (a), displeased with the incident, decided to pay the blood money from the treasury as the killer's identity remained unknown.[1] ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās appointed Abū l-Aswad al-Duʾalī as his replacement in Basra and subsequently joined ʿAlī (a) with his army.[2] Imam ʿAlī (a) overheard some of his companions cursing the Levantine people and Muʿāwiya. He promptly prohibited them from engaging in such cursing. "I don't like you to curse! Rather, describe their deeds and define their situation, that is a more judicious way of speaking and more convincing."[3]

In that region, after the renewal of allegiance, some people approached Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) expressing their hesitations about facing the Levantine army, despite their belief in the Imam's virtue and superiority. They requested to be dispatched to the borders to defend the government there. The Imam granted their request and sent them to regions such as Rey and Qazvin.[4]

Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) in Karbala

As the Imam (a) and his army were passing through Karbala, the Imam remarked, "There is sadness and tragedy in this place." He then pointed to specific areas and said, "This is where they store their belongings. This is where they keep their horses. This is where their blood will be shed."[5] With tears welling in his eyes, he lamented, "What does the household of Abū Sufyān have to do with me?" He then turned to his son, Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), and said, "O Abā ʿAbd Allāh! Be patient. Your father has endured as much hardship from them as you will witness."[6]

People from Various Regions Joining the Army of Kufa

On their journey, ʿAlī (a) and his forces passed through Madain. There, he appointed Saʿd b. Masʿūd al-Thaqafī as the governor of Madain, and the city's army joined Imam's forces. They continued their expedition. Additionally, he dispatched a 3000-member army to Mosul, instructing them to remain there until he and his army could join them.[7] In that region, the peasants brought gifts to Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), but he humbly refused to

1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 94-95; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 293; Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 164.
2. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 116.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 206; Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 165.
4. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 115; Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 165; Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 544.
5. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 142.
6. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 552.
7. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 565.

accept them, saying, "We do not need these gifts more than you do. It is we who should be giving you gifts."[1]

In al-Anbar, when ʿAlī (a) observed the peasants eagerly running ahead of him, putting themselves in trouble and presenting gifts, he remarked, "By God, this behavior does not benefit your rulers at all! All you are doing is causing suffering to yourself while earning wretchedness for the hereafter. O how great the loss when suffering is followed by punishment! How great the profit when ease is followed by freedom from hellfire."[2] In al-Jazīra, the people from the Banū Taghlib and Banū al-Namir b. Qāsiṭ tribes joined ʿAlī (a). However, the inhabitants of Raqqa, who were supporters of ʿUthmān, barricaded the city's gates and staged a sit-in. ʿAlī (a) dispatched Mālik al-Ashtar, who successfully quelled their resistance.[3]

The Last Letter to Muʿāwiya and the Ultimatum

It was during that time that ʿAlī (a) penned a letter of ultimatum to Muʿāwiya, inviting him and his companions to return to the right path. In the letter, ʿAlī (a) referenced the mission of the Prophet (s) and reminded Muʿāwiya of his own virtues, asserting that Muʿāwiya had no rightful claim to govern the Muslims. He urged Muʿāwiya and his companions to adhere to the Book of God (the Quran) and the traditions of the Prophet (s), emphasizing his concern for preventing the shedding of Muslim blood.[4] In response, however, Muʿāwiya simply replied with a verse of poetry alluding to the prospect of military confrontation.[5]

The Advance of the Army's Forerunners towards Basra

Imam ʿAlī (a) issued orders for Ziyād b. al-Naḍr al-Ḥārithī to lead a force of 8,000 soldiers, while Shurayḥ b. Hānī was instructed to lead 4,000 soldiers. The Imam (a) advised Ziyād b. al-Naḍr to position his army strategically on high grounds or mountain slopes, and near rivers, while remaining vigilant against the enemy. He said to him,

> "O Ziyād! Strive to maintain wariness of God day and night, and be mindful of the deceptive nature of this world. Never feel secure from its harms. Know that if you do not restrain your desires for the sake of avoiding displeasure in the hereafter, your personal desires will cause you more harm. Therefore, restrain your soul from transgression and injustice. I have appointed you as the commander of this army,

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 187.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 37.
3. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 145-46; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 187.
4. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 149-51.
5. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 297.

> so do not oppress them. Choose the best among them based on their piety. Learn from those who possess knowledge among them and educate the ignorant among them. Exercise patience with the foolish among them, as you will attain goodness through patience and leniency. Always refrain from causing harm and from displaying bad temper."[1]

ʿAlī (a) ordered Ziyād b. al-Naḍr and Shurayḥ b. Hānī to advance with their soldiers ahead of his army. Along the way, their troops encountered the Levantine army. They informed Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) about the encounter, explaining their unsuccessful attempts to persuade the Levantine army to join the forces of Kufa. In a message to Mālik al-Ashtar, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) instructed him to catch up with Ziyād and Shurayḥ. Additionally, he advised Mālik not to initiate war unless he personally witnessed the events or confirmed the accuracy of the reports, and only after issuing an ultimatum, or in response to the enemy's initiation of conflicts. ʿAlī (a) further advised Mālik to exercise moderation in warfare. Moreover, he wrote to Ziyād and Shurayḥ, informing them of his appointment of Mālik al-Ashtar as their commander and reiterating his previous orders to them not to initiate war, but rather to issue an ultimatum to the enemy.[2]

Imam ʿAlī's Letter to the Governors of the Regions along the Way

In a letter addressed to the governors of the regions along the route of the Kufa army towards the Levant, Imam ʿAlī (a) wrote:

> "From God's servant, ʿAlī, Commander of the Faithful, to the tax collectors and administrators whose lands my army will pass through:
>
> I have dispatched troops who, God willing, will pass through your lands, and I have instructed them to observe what they owe to God, to refrain from causing destruction or any kind of harm. I repudiate before God and before our compact, any violations by the army except in times of hunger when they have no other way to curb its pangs. Punish anyone who seizes something he has no right to, but restrain too the hands of your rash fools from obstructing the troops or challenging them when they take what I have allowed. I am coming up right behind the army, so bring me any complaints of unjust behavior or hardships which you are not able to repel except through God and me. If God wills it and with his help, I shall correct the wrong."[3]

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1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 121-25; see also Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 11; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 565.
2. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 153-54; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 566-67.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 60.

In Ṣiffīn

The two armies encountered in Dhū l-Ḥijja 36/May-June 657, in a region called Ṣiffīn.[1]

A Preemptive Attack by the Levantine Army and the Blockade of to Water

Initially, the army of Muʿāwiya, led by Abū l-Aʿwar al-Sulamī, launched attacks on the army of Kufa, commanded by Mālik al-Ashtar, before Imam ʿAlī (a) arrived. However, their efforts were met with strong resistance. Abū l-Aʿwar launched a preemptive attack and successfully gained control over the *sharīʿa*[2] of the Euphrates.[3] Upon receiving orders from Muʿāwiya, and despite the opposition of ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, he obstructed ʿAlī's army from accessing water from the river.[4] According to reports, Muʿāwiya allegedly stated, "If ʿAlī and his companions drink from the Euphrates, then may God deprive Muʿāwiya and his father of the pond of Muḥammad [i.e., the Pond of Kawthar in Paradise]."[5]

Upon the arrival of the Kufa army, Imam ʿAlī (a) ordered Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣūḥān to deliver an ultimatum to the Muʿāwiya army, inviting them to the path of truth and warning them to grant access to drinking water. However, as they refused to comply, ʿAlī (a) subsequently dispatched Mālik al-Ashtar and al-Ashʿath b. Qays, who secured access to the drinking water.[6]

After the Kufa army gained access to the drinking water, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ approached Muʿāwiya and asked, "What if they block our access to the drinking water, just as we did to them yesterday?" Muʿāwiya responded, "Let us forget about what happened in the past. What is your opinion of ʿAlī?" ʿAmr replied, "He will do the same as we did, for he has not come here solely for water." Following this exchange, ʿAlī (a) declared a temporary truce, instructing that no one should impede the army of the Levant from accessing water.[7] When Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) received requests from his own army to retaliate by blocking the Levantine army's access to water, he firmly declared, "I swear by God that I will not do the same as they did. Allow them access to water."[8]

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1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 196.
2. The part of river where drinking water can be obtained.
3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 567-68.
4. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 125.
5. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 7.
6. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 160-69; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 571-72.
7. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 169.
8. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 24.

ʿAlī's Attempts to Avert the War

As mentioned before, the Kufa army entered the Ṣiffīn region in Dhū l-Ḥijja 36/May-June 657. The two armies engaged in scattered skirmishes, including one for access to water. However, when the month of Muḥarram arrived, a truce was declared to honor the sanctity of this sacred month. Taking advantage of this moment, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) dispatched emissaries to the Levantine army, with the hope of guiding them towards the right path and preventing further casualties.[1]

In order to avoid conflicts and with the intention of guiding the enemy, ʿAlī (a) deliberately delayed the start of the war. He dispatched emissaries to Muʿāwiya, inviting him to return to the right path and prevent the shedding of Muslim blood. However, Muʿāwiya insulted the emissaries, stating, "Stay away from me. There is nothing between us but wrath and the sword."[2] On a second occasion, ʿAlī (a) sent different individuals to advise Muʿāwiya. In response, Muʿāwiya reciprocated by sending emissaries to ʿAlī (a), demanding retribution for the death of ʿUthmān and proposing the establishment of a council to decide on the caliphate.[3]

During that period, some members of ʿAlī's army urged him to initiate the war. They informed him that there were soldiers who believed he was delaying the war out of fear of death and harboring doubts about fighting the people of Levant. In response, ʿAlī (a) emphatically stated, "When have I ever been [afraid of] or disgusted by wars? ... I have delayed this in the hope that they, or at least some of them, may find guidance. The Messenger of God told me on the Day of Khaybar, 'If God guides just one person through you, it would be better for you than possessing everything on Earth'."[4]

Declaration of War

After the exchange of unsuccessful emissaries and the conclusion of the Muḥarram month, on the evening of Wednesday, at the start of Ṣafar 37/July 657, the army of Kufa officially declared war. ʿAlī (a) chose one of his companions to address the army of Muʿāwiya. He conveyed the message that Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) had delayed the war out of respect for the Muḥarram month. He then stated, "O people of the Levant! Amīr al-Muʾminīn informs you that he has given you time to return to the path of truth and embrace it. He has engaged in arguments with you based on the Book of God, but your

1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 196-97.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 573-74.
3. See Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 197-202; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 5-8; Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 20-23.
4. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd. *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 4: 13-14.

rebellion has not ceased, and you have failed to respond to the truth. He no longer has any agreement with you, for God does not favor traitors."[1]

Preparations of the Army

Following that period, Imam ʿAlī (a) made strategic appointments within his army. He appointed ʿAmmār b. Yāsir as the commander of the cavalry, ʿAbd Allāh b. Budayl b. Warqāʾ al-Khuzāʿī as the commander of the infantry, Hāshim b. ʿUtba as the standard-bearer, Mālik al-Ashtar at the forefront, Shurayḥ b. Hānī at the flank, and Imam al-Ḥasan (a) at the heart of the army. Furthermore, he designated Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr as the commander of the Muhājirūn and Anṣār soldiers, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās as the commander of the soldiers from Basra, and ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib as the commander of the soldiers from Kufa. In Muʿāwiya's army, Abu l-Aʿwar al-Sulamī was appointed as the commander of the front line, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ as the commander of the cavalry, and Muslim b. ʿUqba as the commander of the infantry. These appointments were made in preparation for the impending confrontation with ʿAlī's army.[2] In organizing his army and assigning tasks related to provisions, Imam ʿAlī (a) allocated the majority of responsibilities to members of the Rabīʿa tribe. However, this decision caused discontent among the members of the Muḍar tribe due to ongoing tribal rivalries. In response, they requested Imam ʿAlī (a) to grant them a more active role in the battle. Recognizing their concerns, ʿAlī (a) accepted their request.[3]

On the opposing side, Muʿāwiya sought to further stoke the flames of animosity by reminding his companions of the encounters they had witnessed between ʿAlī (a) and the polytheists during the Prophet's wars. Many of their relatives had met their demise at the hand of ʿAlī (a). This incitement influenced his companions, including figures such as al-Walīd b. ʿUqba, Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, and ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿĀmir.[4]

Composition of the Army of Kufa

At the outset of the Battle of Ṣiffīn, the army of Kufa was comprised of the following:

First group: The Yemeni tribes of Hamdān, al-Nakhaʿ, and Banū Khuzāʿa, who unwaveringly followed the commands of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a).

Second group: The Yemeni tribe of Kinda, which was further divided into two factions. The first faction, led by Ḥujr b. ʿAdī, consisted of devoted followers of Imam ʿAlī

1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 202-3.
2. See Ibid., 204-15; Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 171-73.
3. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 99.
4. Ibid., 3: 117.

(a). The second faction, led by al-Ashʿath b. Qays, joined Imam ʿAlī's ranks due to his influence and political considerations.

Third group: The Banū Qays tribes, which included Tamīm. This group primarily consisted of Bedouins, and as such, they were deeply rooted in tribal affiliations and known for their ruggedness and stubbornness. Perhaps due to these characteristics, after their initial clashes with ʿAlī (a), they eventually splintered off to form the Kharijite[1] faction.[2]

ʿAlī's Supplication before the War

In a heartfelt supplication before the commencement of the war, ʿAlī (a) beseeched,

> "O God! The eyes are fixed upon Your threshold, the hands are raised to You, the steps are directed towards You, the tongues are supplicating, the hearts are turned to You, and all actions are ultimately judged by You. So, judge between us and them with justice, for You are the best of arbitrators. O God! We lament to You the absence of our Prophet (s), the smallness of our numbers, the multitude of our enemies, the dispersion of our desires, the challenging times we face, and the rise of divisions among us. Aid us against them with a swift victory and grant us assistance that brings honor and reveals the triumph of truth."[3]

Amīr al-Muʾminīn's Advice to his Army

Just like in all of his previous engagements, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) offered general advice to his army, emphasizing,

> "Unless they initiate aggression against you, refrain from fighting them, as this serves as another ultimatum to them. If you engage in battle and emerge victorious, do not harm any fleeing individuals, spare the wounded, and show respect to the fallen soldiers. Should you enter their camp, do not disturb any veils or trespass into any homes. Take only what you find in their military camp. Do not disrespect or cause harm to any women, even if they hurl the gravest insults towards you and your commander."[4]

ʿAlī (a) took his place on the battlefield, and prior to the start of the war, he addressed his companions, saying, "Don't attack them unless they attack you first. Praise God, you

1. The Kharijite or *al-Khawārij* were factions of Muslims who revolted against Imam ʿAlī (a) during and following the Battle of Ṣiffīn and the incident of arbitration (*ḥakamiyya*). Their dissent eventually caused unrest and led to the Battle of Nahrawān (for more information, see Nājī, et al., "Khawārij.").

2. Bayḍūn, *al-Imām ʿAlī*, 88-89.

3. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 231.

4. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 4: 26.

already possess proof of righteousness, and waiting until they begin the fighting will be yet another proof against them and in your favor. If we defeat the enemy—and with God's permission, we shall! —then don't kill those who flee, don't strike the unarmed, and don't bear down on the wounded."[1]

In motivating his companions to engage in battle, ʿAlī (a) declared:

> "Indeed, Allah, the Almighty, has guided you to a trade that will save you from a painful punishment and lead you to goodness: faith in Allah and striving in His cause. He has made its reward forgiveness of sins and pleasant dwellings in the gardens of Paradise. Allah, the Almighty, says: 'Indeed Allāh loves those who fight in His way in ranks, as if they were a compact structure.' (Q 61:4) So, align your ranks like a solid structure ... Seek assistance through patience and truthfulness, for victory only descends after patience. Strive for Allah as is His due."[2]

Following that, Saʿīd b. Qays and Mālik al-Ashtar delivered stirring speeches to inspire and rally the people to fight.[3]

The Outbreak of the Battle

Finally, on Wednesday, Ṣafar 1, 37/July 22, 657, the war commenced.[4] According to historical accounts, the war raged fiercely for the first seven days, resulting in significant casualties on both sides. It was on the fifth day, when the Kufan army, led by ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, confronted the Levantine army, that the Kufans gained the advantage. As the battle progressed, on the seventh day, the Levantine army suffered heavy losses with numerous fatalities and injuries. From the fifth day onwards, the Kufan army delivered decisive blows to the Levantine forces.[5]

The Imam's Presence on the Battlefield

Although in all of his battles, ʿAlī (a) was always present on the battlefield,[6] historical sources have reported his specific presence on the eighth day of the Battle of Ṣiffīn.[7] With his presence on the battlefield, ʿAlī (a) was able to vanquish a number of individuals on

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāgha*, letter 14.
2. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 5: 39-40.
3. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 236-37, 244-45.
4. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 378.
5. See Ṭabrī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 12-14; Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 378-79; see also Rayshahrī, *Mawsūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī* (*a*), 6: 108-15.
6. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 477-78.
7. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 379.

the enemy side.[1] Probably on this very day, when Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) realized the heavy casualties on both sides, he addressed Muʿāwiya, who was standing on a hilltop, stating: "Woe to you! Why are people fighting between you and me, killing each other? You should come and fight me yourself. The one who kills the other will have the government." Upon hearing these words, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ told Muʿāwiya, "He is speaking justly. If you do not accept his proposal, it will bring shame upon you and your lineage as long as Arabs exist on Earth." However, acknowledging ʿAlī's valor and courage, Muʿāwiya rejected the idea of a one-on-one fight with him.[2]

ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) displayed immense valor on the battlefield, launching attacks on the Levantine army from every direction. He fearlessly penetrated the enemy's ranks, fighting with such bravery that upon returning to the military camp for brief moments of rest, his sword was found bent from the force of his strikes, and he was covered in blood from head to toe. Without hesitation, he straightened his sword and resumed his relentless assault on the enemy's forces. This continued throughout the day until nightfall.[3] On one occasion, ʿAlī (a) found himself alone with ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ. With a powerful strike of his sword, he caused ʿAmr to fall from his horse. However, when ʿAlī (a) was about to deliver the final blow, ʿAmr shamelessly exposed his genitals. Out of a sense of modesty, ʿAlī (a) averted his gaze, giving ʿAmr an opportunity to escape.[4]

Once again, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) extended an invitation to Muʿāwiya for a one-on-one fight, but once again Muʿāwiya adamantly refused.[5] One day, reminding the deep-seated animosity between the Banū Umayya and the Banū Hāshim, ʿAlī (a) instructed ʿAbd Allāḥ b. ʿAbbās to lend him his weapon and garment. Mounted on a horse, he bravely charged into the enemy's army. Initially, the Levantine soldiers mistook him for ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās and engaged in combat, resulting in the death of many of them. Later, Imam ʿAlī (a) went back to the military camp and returned Ibn ʿAbbās's belongings to him. When Muʿāwiya discovered that the individual they fought was actually ʿAlī (a), he became extremely angry. In that moment, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ said, "If it weren't for the promise of ruling over Egypt, I would have withdrawn from this battle. I know that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib is in the right and you are in the wrong." Muʿāwiya then mocked ʿAmr for the indecent manner in which he had saved himself from ʿAlī (a). In response, ʿAmr said, "I

1. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 29-31.
2. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 274-75; see also Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 126.
3. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 183.
4. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 127; see also Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 7: 263.
5. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 388.

swear by God that when ʿAlī (a) challenged you to a one-on-one fight, your eyes squinted [in fear], you were gasping for breath, and things happened inside you that I would rather not mention. So either mock yourself as well or refrain from ridiculing me."[1]

ʿAlī's Dedication to Performing Prayers

On a particular day of the battle, while deeply engrossed in combat, Imam ʿAlī (a) suddenly glanced at the sky. Curious, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās asked him why he did so. In response, ʿAlī (a) said, "I look to see if it is time for prayer, so that I may perform it." Surprised, Ibn ʿAbbās questioned whether they should be performing prayers in such circumstances, considering they were occupied with a war. To this, ʿAlī (a) replied, "Why are we fighting them? We fight not but for the purpose of [establishing] prayer."[2]

The Imam's Treatment of the Prisoners of War

There are accounts of Amīr al-Muʾminīn's treatment of prisoners during the Battle of Ṣiffīn. Amidst the chaos, a prisoner was brought before ʿAlī (a). Filled with fear, the prisoner pleaded, "Please do not kill me while I am in captivity." ʿAlī (a) responded, "I will not kill you while you are imprisoned, for I fear the Lord of the worlds." He then released the prisoner and asked, "Will you pledge allegiance to me?" The individual accepted and pledged their allegiance to him.[3] On another occasion during the Battle of Ṣiffīn, whenever a prisoner was brought before ʿAlī (a), he would disarm them and make them swear not to fight against him. Afterwards, he would give them four *dirhams* and set them free.[4]

Muʿāwiya's Attempts to Sow Division within the Army of Kufa

Amidst the ongoing conflicts, ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿUmar, who had previously fled to Muʿāwiya out of fear of ʿAlī's (a) justice, encountered Imam al-Ḥasan (a). He reminded the al-Ḥasan (a) that the Quraysh were not pleased with ʿAlī's caliphate due to their deep-seated animosity towards him. He suggested that Imam al-Ḥasan (a) should succeed his father and offered to pledge his allegiance to him. In response, Imam al-Ḥasan (a) firmly stated, "I swear by God that this will never happen. I see that you will meet your demise soon, whether today or tomorrow. Satan has made this path appear enticing to you and

1. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 3: 19-20.
2. Daylamī, *Irshād al-qulūb*, 2: 217.
3. Saʿīd b. Manṣūr, *Sunan*, 2: 391.
4. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 7: 549.

has deceived you." Shortly after their encounter, ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿUmar went to the battlefield with an army of 4,000 soldiers and was ultimately killed.[1]

During that time, upon learning about certain actions of al-Ashʿath b. Qays, Imam ʿAlī (a) decided to remove him from his position of commanding the soldiers of his tribe, and appointed someone else in his place. This decision angered the heads of the al-Ashʿath tribe and the heads of Kinda. Exploiting the situation, Muʿāwiya saw an opportunity to sow discord within ʿAlī's army by sending verses of poetry to al-Ashʿath. Hearing about this, Shurayḥ b. Hānī al-Madhḥijī, a respected figure in Kufa, warned al-Ashʿath that Muʿāwiya had no intentions other than to incite animosity. In response, Shurayḥ composed a poem directed at Muʿāwiya, which, upon reading, left Muʿāwiya disappointed with al-Ashʿath's alignment.[2]

The Thursday Event

On Thursday, Safar 9, 37/July 27, 657, the battle intensified and came to be known as the *Waqʿat al-Khamīs* or the Thursday Event. A witness on the battlefield described the Thursday Event as follows:

> "I solemnly swear that during the Thursday Event, we were in close proximity to ʿAlī (a). However, the tribes that had allied against him were attacking from both sides. I swear by God, the sight of their casualties, the sound of swords striking their soldiers' heads, the thundering sound of horse hooves, and the heaps of dead bodies would have caused mountains to crumble if they had witnessed and heard it. In that moment, I approached ʿAlī (a), and he was murmuring, 'There is no power nor strength except by God (*lā ḥawl wa-lā quwwa illā bi-Allāh*).' He then stood up and said: 'Our Lord! Judge justly between us and our people, and You are the best of judges' (Q 7:89). Then, ʿAlī (a) launched a fierce attack at the heart of the enemy and fought relentlessly until nightfall. On that day, prominent figures among the Arabs were slain, and ʿAlī (a) himself received three blows to his head and two wounds on his face."[3]

On that very day, ʿAlī (a) adorned himself with the Prophet's armor, grasped the Prophet's sword, and donned the Prophet's turban. Mounted on the Prophet's horse, he addressed the people, saying,

> "O people! Whoever offers his life [for the sake of God] today shall reap great rewards. I swear by God, we would not have chosen the path of death had it not

1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 297-98.
2. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 68-69.
3. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 363.

> been for the violation of divine boundaries, the infringement of rights, the emergence of injustice, and the triumph of Satan. Indeed, the adornment of women is henna, while the adornment of men is blood. Know that this [the Battle of Ṣiffīn] is a consequence of the grudges held from the battles of Badr and Uhud, the deep-seated enmities from the era of ignorance [*jāhilīyya*]. Muʿāwiya has rallied the ignorant to wage war and avenge the blood of Banū ʿAbd Shams." He then recited the following verse from the Quran: "then fight the leaders of unfaith—indeed, they have no [commitment to] pledges, maybe they will desist" (Q 9:12).[1]

Inspired by the words of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), over ten thousand individuals surged onto the battlefield with their swords drawn, launching a sudden and fierce assault on the ranks of the Levantine army. The enemy forces crumbled, and their soldiers began to flee in all directions. None could withstand the might of ʿAlī's sword. Meanwhile, the army of Kufa advanced towards the military camp and Muʿāwiya's residence. Initially, Muʿāwiya sought to mount his horse and escape the battlefield, but as he placed his foot in the stirrup, he had a change of heart.[2]

Martyrdom of ʿAmmār b. Yāsir and Other Companions of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a)

ʿAmmār b. Yāsir bravely advanced towards the battlefield and called out, "O people! Who among you desires to enter paradise?" In response, 500 soldiers from ʿAlī's army, including Abū l-Haytham b. al-Tayyihān and Khuzayma b. Thābit, known as *Dhū l-Shahādatayn*, a revered companion of the Prophet (s), joined him. Throughout the course of the battle, ʿAmmār chanted hymns and proclaimed, "Today, I will reunite with my beloved, Muḥammad, and his companions." In the midst of the fierce combat, ʿAmmār was martyred at the hands of two soldiers from Muʿāwiya's army.[3]

The killing of ʿAmmār at the hands of Muʿāwiya's army created a challenging situation for him. This was due to the widespread knowledge among the people that the Prophet (s) had foretold ʿAmmār, "You will be killed by the rebellious group (*al-fiʾa al-bāghiya*)."[4] This statement became so renowned that during the Battle of Jamal, when al-Zubayr discovered that ʿAmmār was fighting alongside ʿAlī's army, he began to doubt his actions

1. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 175.

2. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 147.

3. Ibid., 1: 146. For the details of how ʿAmmār was martyred, see Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 340-43; Balādhurī, *Asāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 310-24; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 38-42.

4. This statement, attributed to the Prophet (s), "You will be killed by a rebellious group," is mentioned in numerous authentic Sunni hadith sources when referring to ʿAmmār's martyrdom (See e.g., Maʿmar b. Rāshid, *Jāmiʿ*, 11: 239; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1: 97, 2: 72; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4: 2236).

due to the Prophet's foretelling.[1] In an effort to distance himself from this accusation, Muʿāwiya propagated the rumor that "ʿAmmār was killed by the one who brought him to the battlefield." In response to this rumor, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) retorted, "If this was true, then the Messenger of God would be the killer of Ḥamza."[2]

Khuzayma b. Thābit was present during the Battle of Jamal but refrained from drawing his sword. Furthermore, during the Battle of Ṣiffīn, he declared, "I will not partake in the war until I witness the death of ʿAmmār and identify his killers. The Messenger of God (s) has foretold that he will be killed by those who have deviated from the right path." When ʿAmmār was martyred, Khuzayma acknowledged that he now knew who had strayed from the right path. Consequently, he joined the battlefield and fought against the Levantine army until he met his own martyrdom.[3] Following the martyrdom of ʿAmmār and Khuzayma, several other devoted companions of ʿAlī (a) were also slain. Among them were ʿAbd Allāh b. Budayl b. Warqāʾ,[4] Abū l-Haytham b. Al-Tayyihān,[5] Uways al-Qaranī,[6] and Hāshim b. ʿUtba.[7]

Muʿāwiya's Request to End the War

During The Thursday Event, the army of Kufa dealt significant blows to the Levantine forces. In the afternoon of that same day, ʿAlī (a) gathered his companions and declared, "Tomorrow, we shall conclude our mission with these people." Upon hearing these words, Mālik al-Ashtar composed verses in response. Meanwhile, Muʿāwiya sent a letter to Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), proposing that he be granted rule over the Levant and suggesting an end to the war. He further asserted that the Banū Umayya and Banū Hāshim were of the same lineage and thus equal. In response, Imam ʿAlī (a) maintained his position and firmly rejected Muʿāwiya's request for the rule of the Levant. He reminded Muʿāwiya of the superiority of the Banū Hāshim over the Banū Umayya, as well as the eminence of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib and Abū Ṭālib (his grandfather and father) over Ḥarb and Abū Sufyān (Muʿāwiya's grandfather and father), refuting any notion of equality between the two tribes.[8]

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1. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 147.
2. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 20: 334; see also Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 159-60. However, Ibn Aʿtham attributed this statement to ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, rather than Amīr al-Muʾminīn.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 170, 313.
4. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 23.
5. Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 3: 180; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 5: 190.
6. Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 98; see also Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 460, 461.
7. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 353-56.
8. Ibid., 469-71.

Muʿāwiya was not satisfied with just one letter. In order to persuade ʿAlī (a) to end the war, he sought the assistance of ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ and decided to win the favor of ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās. Consequently, he instructed ʿAmr to write a letter to Ibn ʿAbbās. In this letter, ʿAmr emphasized the esteemed position of Ibn ʿAbbās and claimed that he was the second most important person in the army after ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a). He then suggested that the war should be brought to an end. Upon reading the letter, Ibn ʿAbbās promptly informed ʿAlī (a) about its contents. Imam ʿAlī (a) instructed him to draft a reply to ʿAmr. In his response, Ibn ʿAbbās pointed out that it was worldly desires that had driven both ʿAmr and Muʿāwiya to wage war against ʿAlī (a). Moreover, he reminded ʿAmr of ʿAlī's practices in wars, highlighting how he would present the truth and issue ultimatums before engaging in battle. Furthermore, Ibn ʿAbbās asserted that he and ʿAmr were not equals in that war, as his intention was for the sake of God, while ʿAmr's desire was to gain rule over Egypt.[1]

The Night of Clamor

On the night known as the Night of Rumble or *Laylat al-Harīr*, which took place on the eve of Friday, Ṣafar 10, 37/July 28, 657, the two armies clashed in battle until midnight. The fighting persisted until all arrows and spears were exhausted, leaving only swords in the hands of the warriors. Amidst the chaos, ʿAlī (a) positioned himself in the center of his army, organizing their ranks. He led the charge, advancing into the heart of the enemy forces. The intense fighting continued until midnight, with both sides fiercely engaged in combat.[2]

At the stroke of midnight, the Levantine army began to retreat, and ʿAlī (a) subsequently issued orders for the proper burial of the fallen soldiers.[3] At that moment, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) delivered a sermon, addressing the people and stating, "O people! This is the point where you and your enemy have arrived. You are aware that they are drawing their last breaths. Events can often be judged from their beginnings. These people have stood against you without any true religious conviction, and they have witnessed what they should have witnessed. Tomorrow morning, I will send them to face divine justice in the court of God." Upon hearing this news, Muʿāwiya sought counsel from ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, asking, "O ʿAmr! This is the night we should anticipate ʿAlī's sword attack. What should we do?" In response, ʿAmr replied, "Your men cannot withstand the

1. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 307-9.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 47.
3. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 369.

companions of ʿAlī (a). You are not like him. He fights for a cause, while your desires lie elsewhere. You seek self-preservation, while he seeks self-sacrifice. The people of Iraq fear your rule over them, but the people of the Levant do not fear ʿAlī's rule. Offer something that, if they accept it, will cause them to be divided. Invite them to the Book of God and make it the arbiter between you and them."[1]

Division within the Army of Kufa and the Ruse of Raising Qurans on Spears

On the same night, Al-Ashʿath b. Qays al-Kindī, a prominent leader of the Kinda tribe that constituted a significant portion of the Iraqi army, delivered a speech. He addressed the Muslims present and said, "O Muslims! You have witnessed the immense loss of life on this day. I swear by God that in all my years, I have never witnessed such a thing. Those of you who are here must inform those who are absent that if the two armies continue to fight tomorrow, more lives will be lost and honors will be violated. I swear by God that I do not say this out of fear, but as an elderly man who worries about the fate of his women and children after his death." Muʿāwiya's spies relayed news of al-Ashʿath's speech to him. Upon hearing these words, Muʿāwiya responded, "I swear by the God of the Kaaba that he speaks the truth. If the two armies clash tomorrow, the Romans will attack our women and children and take them captive, while the Persians will show no mercy to the women and children of Iraq. Indeed, this is what men of wisdom and experience say." With Muʿāwiya's persuasion, these words were spread among the Levantine army. In the darkness of the night, the soldiers of the Levant addressed the Iraqi soldiers, shouting, "O people of Iraq! If we are slain, who will support our women and children? If you are slain, what will happen to your women and children?" As dawn broke, following ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ's suggestion to Muʿāwiya, the Levantine army placed Qurans on top of their spears and proclaimed, "O people of Iraq! Let the Book of God arbitrate between you and us."[2]

Upon witnessing the actions of the Levantine army, ʿAlī (a) reacted with suspicion, exclaiming, "This is a deceitful ploy! They are not companions of the Quran." In that moment, al-Ashʿath b. Qays, whom Muʿāwiya had previously attempted to win over through a letter, objected to ʿAlī (a) and claimed, "He [i.e., Muʿāwiya] calls the people to the truth." ʿAlī (a), however, responded, "They have deceived you and seek to dissuade you from engaging in battle with them." Al-Ashʿath then stated, "If you do not heed their words, I will part ways with you." The Yemeni tribes, who had previously been loyal to Imam ʿAlī (a), expressed agreement with al-Ashʿath, possibly due to tribal biases. Al-

1. Ibid., 476-77; see also Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 143-44; Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 188.
2. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 480-81.

Ashʿath continued, saying, "I swear by God that either you listen to their words or we will hand you over to them." Those who supported the continuation of the war did not stay silent. ʿAdī b. Ḥātim, Mālik al-Ashtar, and ʿAmr b. al-Ḥamiq delivered speeches, expressing their unwavering support for Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a). A verbal dispute erupted between Mālik and al-Ashʿath, raising concerns about potential divisions within the Iraqi army.[1]

As the Qurans were placed on top of spears and calls for arbitration filled the air, ʿAlī (a) spoke out, and declared,

> "O servants of God! Continue the war against your enemy. Muʿāwiya, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, ʿUqba b. Abī Muʿayṭ, Ḥabīb b. Maslama, and ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Sarḥ [the commanders of Muʿāwiya's army] are not people of true religious conviction or understanding of the Quran. I know them better than you do. I have witnessed their behavior since they were children and have interacted with them as adults. They were the worst as children, and they remain the worst as men. Woe unto you! They have placed Qurans on their spears as a deceptive ploy, while they lack comprehension of what the Quran truly signifies. Stand with me, and join forces, for the time is short until we vanquish falsehood."

In that moment, a group of 20 thousand individuals, their faces veiled, swords drawn, and bearing marks of prostration on their foreheads, approached Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a). They were accompanied by a group of *al-Qurrāʾ*[2] (reciters) who would later become known as the Kharijite. With an insulting tone, they warned him, "O ʿAlī! Heed the words of these people regarding the reference to the Book of God. Otherwise, we will kill you just as we killed ʿUthmān." In response, ʿAlī (a) firmly stated, "Woe unto you! I am the one who called for adherence to the Book of God, and I was the first to embrace it. It is not fitting for me to be called upon to follow the Quran and then reject it. I fought against them to guide them in accordance with the rulings of the Quran. They disobeyed God's command, violated their pledge to Him, and rejected His Book. I warned you that they were deceiving you, and their true intentions do not align with acting upon the Quran." However, they insisted, "Command Mālik al-Ashtar to return to you." Prior to these events, in the early hours of that day, Mālik had prepared for the final assault on Muʿāwiya's camp.[3]

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1. Ibid., 482; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 188-89.

2. In Islamic historical sources, the term *al-Qurrāʾ* refers to groups of Iraqis who had revolted against ʿUthmān and later opposed ʿAlī (a). These groups formed the primary core of the Kharijite, with whom ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) would later engage in battle (for further details, see Nagel, "Ḳurrāʾ," *EI²* 5: 499-500).

3. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 489-90; see also Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 48-49.

Amīr al-Muʾminīn's Agreement to End the War

The Levantine army was in a dire state. As mentioned earlier, on the fifth day of the war, the Kufa army had inflicted significant damage upon the Levantine forces. During the Thursday Event, the battlefield was marked by intense fighting, and the Levantine army found itself in a weakened position. On the Night of Rumble, the majority of the casualties were suffered by the Levantine army.[1] According to reports, Muʿāwiya expressed his desire to flee the battlefield on that night. However, he had a change of heart after recalling a verse of poetry.[2] On the day when Qurans were displayed on spears, the Levantine army was on the brink of a devastating defeat. The situation for Muʿāwiya and his forces was so dire that Muʿāwiya himself admitted, "I swear by God, on the day when Qurans were placed on spears, Mālik al-Ashtar returned to ʿAlī, and in that moment, I contemplated asking him to intercede on my behalf for safe passage from ʿAlī. I had indeed made up my mind to flee the battlefield."[3]

According to reports, during the repeated attacks by the Kufa army on the Levantine forces, a significant number of soldiers from the Kufa army ignored the orders to attack and refused to engage in battle.[4] Exhausted from the intense battles they had fought, the soldiers grew hesitant to continue the fight. This sentiment was echoed by al-Ashʿath b. Qays, as mentioned earlier. Witnessing the divisions within his own army and the mounting pressure he faced, ʿAlī (a) made a critical decision. Just as Mālik al-Ashtar was on the brink of securing a final victory, ʿAlī (a) sent a messenger, informing him of the internal split within the army and the potential danger to his own life. Consequently, Mālik al-Ashtar had no choice but to abandon his advance and return. During that period, al-Ashʿath b. Qays was granted permission by ʿAlī (a) to meet with Muʿāwiya and ascertain his intentions. Upon his return, al-Ashʿath informed ʿAlī (a) that Muʿāwiya was proposing the appointment of arbitrators to facilitate a process of arbitration.[5]

ʿAlī's Sermon after the End of the War

Following these events, ʿAlī (a) delivered a sermon addressed to his companions, stating:

> "Indeed, your actions have weakened the strength of Islam, diminished its power, and brought about humiliation. You had the advantage, and the enemy feared defeat at your hands. Many of them had already suffered casualties and

1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 369.
2. Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil*, 4: 57.
3. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 188.
4. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 47.
5. Ibid., 49-50.

> experienced the pain of injury. They raised Qurans and called you to abide by its teachings, hoping to appease your anger and bring an end to the war. Through deceitful tactics, they left you at the mercy of circumstances. And yet, you agreed to what pleased them and gave them whatever they desired. You have been deceived. I swear by God, if you continue on this path, I fear that you have forsaken reason, understanding, and the rectification of your affairs."[1]

Arbitration

When the matter of selecting two arbitrators arose, both Muʿāwiya and the Levantine army reached a unanimous decision to appoint ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ as their representative arbiter.[2] In ʿAlī's army, a disagreement emerged regarding the selection of their representative arbiter. Initially, ʿAlī (a) intended to appoint ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās for this role. However, due to long-standing rivalries between the people of Yemen and the Hijaz, al-Ashʿath b. Qays argued that both arbiters should not be from Muḍar and the Hijaz. He proposed that Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī be chosen as an arbiter on behalf of the Iraqis. He also stated that Abū Mūsā was not present in any of ʿAlī's battles. In response, ʿAlī (a) expressed his reservations, stating, "Abū Mūsā is an adversary. He prevented the people of Kufa from supporting the Iraqi army." Nonetheless, al-Ashʿath and his companions still insisted on the appointment of Abū Mūsā as an arbiter.[3] In some accounts, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) proposed Mālik al-Ashtar as a potential candidate for arbitration. However, the Yemenis and al-Ashʿath vehemently rejected this suggestion.[4]

During the process of selecting the arbiter, the tribal dynamics within the Iraqi army became apparent. The diverse range of tribes within the Iraqi army had become a vulneRabīʿlity rather than a strength.[5] Ultimately, Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī, who hailed from Yemeni tribes, was designated as the arbiter representing ʿAlī (a).

The First Arbitration Agreement

The two arbiters convened in Ṣafar 37/July 657, to draft an initial agreement. On Ṣafar 13/July 31, the first agreement was written, stipulating that they should base their judgments solely on the Quran and refrain from being influenced by personal desires or treachery. The agreement was authenticated by 10 witnesses from Iraq and 10 witnesses

1. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 268-69.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 333.
3. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 189.
4. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 192-93.
5. For more information about the impact of the tribal system on the selection of the two arbiters and on the formation of Kharijite, see Pākatchī, "Niẓām-i qabila-ʾī wa khāstgāh-i Khawārij-i nakhustīn."

from the Levant. A disagreement arose during the drafting of the agreement regarding the inclusion of the title Amīr al-Muʾminīn (Commander of the Faithful). While ʿAlī (a) himself and some of his companions, such as al-Aḥnaf b. Qays and Mālik al-Ashtar, insisted on including the title, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ refused, arguing that if Muʿāwiya acknowledged ʿAlī (a) as the Commander of the Faithful, he would no longer be in opposition to him. As al-Ashʿath b. Qays aligned with ʿAmr, the disagreement intensified. Eventually, ʿAlī (a) cited the example of the Hudaybiyya Peace Treaty, where the disbelievers of Quraysh did not include the title Messenger of Allah for the Prophet (s). In light of this, ʿAlī (a) instructed his scribe, ʿUbayd Allāh b. Abī Rāfiʿ, to write his name without the title Amīr al-Muʾminīn. Consequently, the initial agreement was written with "ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib" and "Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān" as the signatories, without the inclusion of the title.[1]

The text of the agreement was as follows:

In the Name of Allah the All-Compassionate the All-Merciful

This is the arbitration document between ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) and Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān:

ʿAlī seeks arbitration on behalf of the people of Kufa and his companions, who are believers and Muslims. Similarly, Muʿāwiya seeks arbitration on behalf of the people of the Levant and his companions, who are believers and Muslims. We submit ourselves to the judgment of Allah, the Exalted and Mighty, and His Book, which shall be the sole authority between us. The Book of God is before us from the beginning to the end. We revive what it revives and we deaden what it deadens. Whatever the arbiters, Abū Musā al-Ashʿarī and ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ al-Qurashī, find the Book of God, they shall act upon it. Whatever they fail to find in the Book of God, they should turn to the just unifying, rather than divisive, tradition. The arbiters have received a pledge from ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya, as well as the two armies, and were assured by the people, that they and their families will be safe, and the nation will assist them in their arbitration task. God's covenant will be imperative upon the believers and Muslims from both groups. We are committed to this document, and their arbitration will be binding for the believers. Wherever they go, they, their families, and their property, as well as the present and the absent from them, will be safe and no weapons shall be used. ʿAbd Allāh b. Qays [i.e., Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī] and ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ are committed to the divine pledge that they

1. See Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 508-9; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 151-53; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 189-90; Ṭabrī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 52-54.

> arbitrate among this nation and do not lead them to a war and division. Otherwise, they have committed a sin. The duration of arbitration is until the Ramadan month. In case they sought to postpone it, they shall do so with mutual consent. If one of the two arbiters dies, the commander of the respective group shall choose a replacement, trying to retain justice and fairness. The place of arbitration will be somewhere between the people of Kufa and the people of the Levant. If the two arbiters prefer, no one else would be present in that place. The two arbiters can take as witness anyone they shall desire and write their testimonies about the content of this document. However, if are against the individual who abandons the content of this document and does injustice, then O God! We seek your assistance against those who abandon the content of this document.[1]

Continued Disagreements within the Army of Kufa

Upon reading the initial agreement to the Tamīm tribe, al-Ashʿath b. Qays faced opposition from ʿUrwa b. Udayya al-Tamīmī, who vehemently chanted "there is no judgment except by Allah" (*lā ḥukm illā lī-llāh*) and even struck al-Ashʿath's horse. This incident caused tension within the camp. However, through the intervention of individuals like al-Aḥnaf b. Qays, the situation eventually deescalated.[2] Furthermore, some of ʿAlī's companions, including Mālik al-Ashtar, Sahl b. Ḥunayf, Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣūḥān, al-Aḥnaf b. Qays, and Jāriya b. Qudāma, opposed the agreement and urged ʿAlī's army to continue fighting. They proposed to ʿAlī (a) that he should break the treaty; however, ʿAlī (a) made it clear to them that once an agreement and pledge had been made, he could not violate it. After delivering a sermon to the people, ʿAlī (a) focused on burying the fallen soldiers and releasing the captives. Reciprocally, Muʿāwiya released the prisoners.[3]

Return from Ṣiffīn

As tensions escalated among the opposing factions within the Iraqi army regarding the arbitration, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) made the decision to leave Ṣiffīn and proceed towards Kufa. Simultaneously, the army of the Levant began their journey towards Damascus.[4] Before his departure, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) delivered a sermon where he openly criticized the formation of the arbitration and reproached those who supported it. He viewed it as an act of disobedience to God and assistance to Satan. Additionally, he emphasized the

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1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 53-54.
2. Ibid., 5: 55.
3. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 511-12, 513, 519-20; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 336; Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 197; Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 4: 202-4.
4. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 395.

elevated status of the Prophet's Household, highlighting their role as the pillars of religion and asserting that no one could be compared to them. Furthermore, he emphasized that the exclusive succession to the Prophet's authority belonged to the Household, affirming that guardianship and authority were their rightful and exclusive positions.[1]

As objections and differing opinions regarding the arbitration persisted, someone approached ʿAlī (a) during their journey back to Kufa. He expressed his confusion, stating, "First, you forbade us from [accepting] the arbitration, and then you commanded us to accept it. We were unsure which path to follow." In response, the Imam replied,

> "This is how one who relinquishes a sound position is rewarded! By God! Had I forced you—when I commanded you what I did—to follow the hard course in which God has ordained good, that sound position would have been established. Then, if you had stayed resolute, I would have guided you, if you had deviated, I would have straightened you, and if you had balked, I would have set you right. But with whom, and through whom! I apply you as the cure when you are my disease, like 'a person who extracts a thorn with a thorn, knowing that the one inclines toward the other!' O God! How weary the physician treating this vicious disease! How tired the water-drawer hauling up these well ropes! O where are the people who were called to Islam and accepted it, who recited the Qur'an and acted on it, who were urged to fight and raced to it? They tore camels from nurslings, snatched swords from their sheaths, and set out to the far regions of the earth, marching steadily, row by row. Some perished, and some survived, neither gladdened by their living nor saddened by their dead, their eyes raw from weeping, their stomachs lean from fasting, their lips withered from praying, their color pale from wakeful nights, and their faces dusty from long prostration. Those were my departed brothers! It is only right that I should thirst for them, that I should wring my hands at their separation! Satan has smoothed his paths for you. He wants to undo your religion, knot by knot, and replace your unity with dissent. Reject his incitements and whisperings! Accept your benefactor's counsel and guard it with care."[2]

The Kharijite Starting to Part Ways

Disputes between the supporters and opponents of arbitration persisted during the journey back to Kufa. Some individuals who had previously pressured ʿAlī (a) to respond to the ploy of displaying Qurans on spears began sowing seeds of division. Along the way

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 2.
2. Ibid., sermon 121.

to Kufa, those who were once proponents of arbitration but now expressed discontentment decided to separate from the army. Upon arrival in Kufa, the Shia of ʿAlī (a) reaffirmed their allegiance to him, declaring their love for those who love ʿAlī (a) and their disdain for those who despise him. These developments led to heightened conflicts between ʿAlī's supporters and those who had separated from his army, known as Kharijite.[1]

When ʿAlī (a) intended to send Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī to attend the final arbitration meeting, members of the Kharijite approached him and criticized his decision to consent to appointing arbiters. They urged him to reject the outcome of the arbitration and wage war against the enemy, namely Muʿāwiya. ʿAlī (a) responded to them, saying, "Regarding the enemy, I had called upon you to fight them when you were in their territories, but you were lazy. Overwhelmed by the pain of your wounds, you became exhausted and disobedient. As for arbitration, it is not a sin, but rather a result of your own laziness and failure, which I was hesitant about. I seek God's forgiveness for any sins." At this point, an individual from the Kharijite threatened ʿAlī (a), stating that he would fight against him if he did not rescind the arbitration.[2]

The Final Arbitration Meeting

As the eight-month deadline came to an end and the month of Ramadan in 37/658 began, ʿAlī (a) sent Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī to Dūmat al-Jandal region with a group of 400 people, including al-Aḥnaf b. Qays, Shurayḥ b. Hānī, and ʿAbd Allāḥ b. ʿAbbās. In parallel, Muʿāwiya dispatched ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ with 400 individuals to the same location.[3] Based on historical records, it is evident that a significant number of key figures in the Kufa front harbored significant doubts about the suitability and competence of Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī to represent Kufa in the arbitration meeting.

Doubts about Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī's Competence

When Abū Mūsā headed towards the meeting, Shurayḥ b. Hānī told him, "O Abū Mūsā! You have been appointed to a significant task that cannot be compensated [if it goes wrong]. Whatever you say, whether it benefits you or harms you, will be considered right and true. If you speak falsely and Muʿāwiya takes control of the caliphate, the people of Iraq will have no peace, while the people of the Levant will suffer no harms." Abū Mūsā replied, "It is not appropriate for a group that is suspicious of me to assign me such a

1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 63-64.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 355.
3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 67.

major task, expecting me to dispel falsehood or secure their rights." Shurayḥ b. Hānī then provided Abū Mūsā with his travel necessities and honored him among the people. Later, al-Aḥnaf b. Qays approached ʿAlī (a) and expressed his concerns, saying, "We have sent someone who would have no problem removing you [from the caliphate]." The news of this disagreement quickly spread among the people.[1]

The Arbitration Session and Its Outcome

After the deadline expired, the two arbitrators convened in Udhruh (*Adhruḥ*) or Dumat al-Jandal[2] to discuss the disagreements. Since Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī believed that ʿUthmān was unjustly killed, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ led the negotiations to the conclusion that since ʿUthmān's killing was unjust, ʿAlī (a) should be disqualified from leadership due to his sheltering of the killers. As a result, it was proposed that the caliphate should be delegated to a council of Muslims. In response, Abū Mūsā also did not consider Muʿāwiya worthy of the caliphate. During the discussion of potential candidates for the caliphate, Abū Mūsā initially suggested Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and later his son-in-law ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar as qualified individuals. Ultimately, the two arbitrators agreed to remove both ʿAlī (a) and Muʿāwiya from power and entrust the caliphate to a council. Despite warnings from ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās and due to the cunning tactics of ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, Abū Mūsā took the *minbar* and declared, "In my opinion, we should remove both ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya and entrust this great task to a council. O people! Know that I have removed ʿAlī from the caliphate, just as I have removed this turban from my head." Subsequently, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ stood up and proclaimed, "O people! Abū Mūsā, the senior Muslim and representative of the Iraqis in this arbitration, is someone who does not compromise his religion for worldly gains. Therefore, he has removed ʿAlī [from caliphate] and I appoint Muʿāwiya [as caliph]." In response, Abū Mūsā cursed ʿAmr, accusing him of betrayal and sin. After exchanging curses, they both left the meeting. Later, due to criticism from the people of Kufa, Abū Mūsā relocated to Mecca.[3]

The Imam's Discontent with the Outcome of the Arbitration

ʿAlī (a) was informed of the outcome of the arbitration, initially dissatisfied with the selection of Abū Mūsā, rejected the outcome and delivered a sermon in which he described the people of Levant as harsh and faithless, suggesting that they chose an

1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 534-36.

2. Both locations are mentioned in sources, but al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229) argues that the place of meeting was Udhruh, which is located between Iraq and the Levant (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 1: 129-30).

3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 350-51; Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 396-99.

arbiter who aligned more with their desires. In contrast, the Iraqis chose an arbiter who was farthest from what they wanted. Imam ʿAlī (a) then proceeded to criticize Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī's behavior during the mobilization of the people of Kufa for the Battle of Jamal, pointing out his hesitations and referring to the battle as a sedition. Additionally, ʿAlī (a) characterized Abū Mūsā as a weak-minded individual who was unfit for the position.[1]

Based on the document signed after the first meeting,[2] the two arbiters were tasked with ending the war and selecting the caliph. However, they deviated from the main topic when ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ brought up the murder of ʿUthmān. ʿAmr attempted to present ʿAlī (a) as responsible for the caliph's assassination in order to question the legitimacy of his caliphate. This unexpected accusation startled Abū Mūsā and caused him to withdraw from his efforts to secure ʿAlī's caliphate.[3]

The Size and Casualties of Both Armies at Ṣiffīn

Various estimates have been given regarding the size of the armies in the Levant and Iraq. The Iraqi army is said to have ranged from 50,000 to 120,000, with the most well-known estimate being 90,000. As for the army of the Levant, estimates range from 60,000 to 130,000, although most historians place it around 80,000.[4]

The compositions of the two armies are also noteworthy. A significant number of the Prophet's companions fought alongside ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) against Muʿāwiya's army. According to some sources, around 2,800 companions of the Prophet (s) took part in the Iraqi army. Among them, 87 had participated in the Battle of Badr alongside the Prophet (s), and 900 were present during the Pledge of the Tree (*Bayʿat al-Riḍwān/al-Shajara*).[5]

In contrast, Muʿāwiya's army consisted of individuals who themselves or their families had previously fought against Islam. Some of them had experienced the loss of their relatives at the hands of ʿAlī (a) during battles in the time of the Prophet (s). One account mentions ʿUtba b. Abī Sufyān addressing Muʿāwiya and his companions,

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1. For the details of this story, see Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 238; Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 541-51; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 156-57.

2. See Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 152-53; Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 194-96; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 190.

3. Bayḍūn, *al-Imām ʿAlī*, 108-9.

4. Rayshahrī, *Mawsūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib* (*a*), 5: 281-82.

5. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 352. In various sources, there are different accounts of the number of companions of the Prophet (s) who joined Imam ʿAlī's army. For example, Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ (d. 240/854) claims that there were 800 companions in Amīr al-Muʾminīn's army who had been present during the Pledge of the Tree. Out of these, 60 were martyred, including ʿAmmār b. Yāsir (Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 196). On the other hand, al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 292/905) states that there were 70 companions who had participated in the Battle of Badr, 700 in the Pledge of the Tree, and 400 from the Anṣār (Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 188).

including Marwān b. al-Ḥakam and al-Walīd b. ʿUqba, stating, "The situation of our companions compared to ʿAlī's companions is peculiar. Among us, there are only those who were wounded by him. He killed my grandfather and took part in killing my uncles. And you, O al-Walīd! He killed your father in the Battle of Jamal and left your brothers orphaned." Furthermore, ʿUtba recited a poem to express Marwān's hostility towards ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a).[1] According to one account, among the Prophet's companions, only al-Nuʿmān b. Bashīr and Maslama b. Mukhallad were present in Muʿāwiya's army.[2]

Regarding the casualty count of the two sides, various figures are mentioned. However, the most well-known historical account states that within a span of 110 days, 25,000 members of the Iraqi army and 45,000 members of the Levantine army were killed.[3]

ʿAlī (a) and the Kharijites

When the initial arbitration agreement was announced, several of ʿAlī's companions from the Banū Murād, Banū Rāsib, and Tamīm tribes opposed the arbitration by chanting the slogan "there is no judgment but by Allāh." Once the outcome of the arbitration was announced, ʿAlī (a) was on his way to Kufa, and along the way, 12,000 people gathered in the village of Harūrāʾ, which was located half a parasang[4] away from Kufa. They appointed Shabath b. Ribʿī as their commander and ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Kawwāʾ as the imam of their congregational prayers.[5]

The Imam's Efforts to Guide the Kharijites

Upon receiving news of their activities, regarding their slogan of "there is no judgment except by Allah," he commented: "The statement is true, but the intent is false."[6] Subsequently, he dispatched ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās to engage with the Kharijite. Imam ʿAlī (a) advised him to debate with them using solely Prophetic traditions, rather than relying on the Quran.[7] Despite ʿAlī's recommendations, Ibn ʿAbbās defended the notion of

1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 417.
2. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 188.
3. Rayshahrī, *Mawsūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib* (*a*), 5: 287-88.
4. A distance of approximately 3 kilometers.
5. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 63.
6. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 40.
7. Ibid., letter 77.

arbitration and the selection of the arbiters, admonishing the Kharijite for their disobedience towards Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a).[1]

As Ibn ʿAbbās failed to convince the Kharijite, Imam ʿAlī (a) dispatched an emissary to engage with them and determine whom they were obedient to. The Imam negotiated with ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Kawwāʾ, one of the leaders of the Kharijite, and inquired about the reasons behind their rebellion (*al-khurūj*). When Ibn al-Kawwāʾ mentioned arbitration, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) responded, "For God's sake! On the day when they displayed Qurans on top of spears, did I not inform you that I knew them better than you did, and they had no knowledge of religion? I have known them from childhood to adulthood, and they were the worst as children and the worst as adults. I advised you to remain firm in your truth and to proceed, as these people raised Qurans out of trickery. However, you rejected my words and accepted their display of Qurans. I told you to remember my words and your disobedience to me." In that moment, a group of the Kharijite asked, "Clarify for us whether it is permissible to appoint humans as arbiters in matters concerning [Muslim] blood." The Imam (a) replied, "We did not appoint humans as arbiters, but the Quran as the arbiter. The Quran is a written text; it does not speak [or arbitrate]. Rather, [the judgment] is spoken by humans." The Kharijite said, "Why did you set a deadline for the arbitration meetings?" The Imam (a) explained, "So that the ignorant may become knowledgeable, and the knowledgeable may remain steadfast in their knowledge, with the hope that God would rectify the affairs of this nation within that period. Return to your homes." Amīr al-Muʾminīn's words temporarily calmed the protests of the Kharijite, and they returned to their homes.[2]

Preparation of the Kharijites for War

When the final outcome of the arbitration was announced, a group of the Kharijite gathered in the house of ʿAbd Allāh b. Wahb al-Rāsibī. Upon hearing Ibn Wahb's teachings on the transitory nature of worldly attachments and the importance of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, they ultimately pledged their allegiance to him on Shawwāl 10, 37/March 21, 658. Initially, they had plans to go to Madain, but upon learning that the residents of that area would not align with the Kharijite, they relocated to the Nahrawān region.[3] Before their departure, ʿAbd Allāh b. Wahb wrote a letter to the people of Basra, inviting them to join the Kharijite in

1. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 4: 252-53.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 65-66.
3. A plain located between Wasit and Baghdad (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 5: 325).

Nahrawān. A group of individuals in Basra agreed to the invitation and joined them.[1] In Nahrawān, they were joined by groups of individuals from both Kufa and Basra.[2]

ʿAlī's Decision to Confront Muʿāwiya Again

In those circumstances, ʿAlī (a) highlighted the mistakes made by the arbiters and called upon the people to prepare for an expedition to the Levant. He also extended an invitation to the Kharijite to join him in the battle against Muʿāwiya. Referring to the deceptive tactics used by ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ against Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī in the final meeting of the two arbiters, ʿAlī (a) penned a letter to the Kharijite, asserting that the arbiters had gone against God's ruling and were driven by personal desires. He rejected the outcome of the arbitration and urged the Kharijite to unite with him against the Levantine army as their common enemy. However, the Kharijite declined ʿAlī's invitation and responded in a letter, stating, "You are not angered for the sake of your Lord, but for your own sake."[3]

Upon receiving the Kharijite's response, ʿAlī (a) was disappointed. He composed a letter addressed to the people of Basra and made the decision to engage in battle against the Levant without the assistance of the Kharijite. He then delivered speeches, urging the people of Kufa to mobilize for this purpose. ʿAlī (a) also sent letters to his appointed governors in various cities, requesting their military forces. Along with a contingent of 3,200 warriors, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās traveled to al-Nukhayla[4] and met ʿAlī (a) there.[5] Upon their arrival, ʿAlī (a) held discussions with the leaders of the tribes in Kufa, and they expressed their readiness to mobilize their respective tribes.[6]

Kharijite Riots and the Imam's Response

Amid these circumstances, ʿAbd Allāh b. Khabbāb, a companion of the Prophet (s), and his wife were killed in Nahrawān due to their support of ʿAlī (a). Additionally, three other women, including Umm Sinān who was also a companion of the Prophet (s), were killed by the Kharijite. Upon receiving news of these incidents, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) dispatched an emissary to the region to assess the situation, but the emissary was also killed by the Kharijite.[7]

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1. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 161-63; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 74-75.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 76.
3. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 163-64.
4. An area near Kufa on the way to the Levant (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 5: 278).
5. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 164-65.
6. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 79.
7. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 167-68.

Upon receiving the news in Kufa, a group of individuals, including al-Ashʿath b. Qays, expressed their concerns to Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a). They stated, "O Amīr al-Muʾminīn! How can we leave them be while we are worried about the safety of our women, children, and property? Lead us in battle against them, and once their threat is subdued, we will join you in the fight against the Levant."[1] The Imam (a) moved to confront the Kharijite, sending Qays b. Saʿd and Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī to Nahrawān,[2] asking the Kharijite to surrender the murderers of ʿAbd Allāh b. Khabbāb, Umm Sinān, and others. However, they replied, stating that the only resolution would be through war, unless the Imam admitted his disbelief and then repented to God, as they had done. Upon hearing their response, the Imam firmly declared, "How can I deny my faith after my engagement in jihads alongside the Messenger of God (s) and my steadfast belief [in God]?" He then cautioned them against abandoning their religion and sowing discord among the Muslim community.[3] In reaction to these developments, the Kharijite among themselves declared, "We shall not entertain any dialogue [with Imam ʿAlī (a) and his companions], and instead, we shall ready ourselves for war, for we are destined for paradise."[4]

The Battle of Nahrawān

In the Nahrawān region, there existed a canal or creek that meandered its way into the Tigris River.[5] The Kharijite initially made their way towards a bridge constructed over the creek, aiming to cross to the western side. Consequently, news reached ʿAlī (a) that the Kharijite had successfully crossed the bridge. In response, ʿAlī (a) stated, "I swear by God that they have not crossed, for the place where they will meet their demise lies ahead, before the bridge." He further asserted, "I swear by God that less than 10 individuals from you [i.e., the army of Kufa] will perish, while even 10 of them [i.e., the Kharijite] will not survive." Some individuals expressed doubt regarding ʿAlī's words, but their skepticism was dispelled when they received information confirming that the Kharijite had not crossed the bridge. At that moment, ʿAlī (a) affirmed, "I swear by God that I did not utter falsehoods, nor was I misinformed."[6]

1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 82.
2. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 207.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 369-70.
4. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 169.
5. Ibn Rusta, *al-Aʿlāq al-nafisa*, 90.
6. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 3: 345.

Arrangement of the Two Armies

Imam ʿAlī (a) organized his army in Nahrawān, assigning different individuals to key positions. Miʿqal b. Qays al-Riyāḥī or Shabath b. Ribʿī were placed on the left wing, Ḥujr b. ʿAdī on the right wing, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣāri led the cavalry, Abū Qutāda al-Anṣāri commanded the infantry, and Qays b. Saʿd was in charge of the people of Medina, consisting of approximately 700 to 800 individuals. On the other side, the Kharijite appointed Zayd b. Ḥuṣayn al-Ṭāʾī on the right wing, Shurayḥ b. Awfā al-ʿAbasī on the left wing, Ḥamza b. Sinān al-Asadī led the cavalry, and Ḥurqūṣ b. Zuhayr commanded the infantry. As the confrontation commenced, Imam ʿAlī (a) entrusted Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣāri with a flag, instructing him that whoever rallied under that flag from the Kharijite would be safe. Abū Ayyūb addressed the Kharijite army, stating, "Anyone whose hands are not stained with the blood of others and has not engaged in banditry shall find safety under this flag. Anyone among you who wishes to go to Kufa or Madain or withdraws from the battlefield will be safe. We seek to punish those who have killed innocent people, not to shed your blood." Upon hearing Abū Ayyūb's words, Farwa b. Nawfal, a prominent figure among the Kharijite, expressed, "By God, I see no reason to fight against ʿAlī. I believe it is wise for me to withdraw from the battlefield and reflect upon whether I should join ʿAlī or fight him."[1] Accompanied by around 500 individuals, he departed from the battlefield and headed towards the regions of al-Bandanījayn and al-Daskara.[2] Approximately 2,500 individuals chose to withdraw from the battle, with some returning to Kufa while around 300 joined ʿAlī's forces. The remaining soldiers, numbering between 1,500 and 1,800, continued to fight against ʿAlī (a) under the leadership of ʿAbd Allāh b. Wahb.[3]

Beginning of the Battle

ʿAlī (a) organized his army and advised his companions, "Do not engage in battle with them unless they initiate the attack." The Kharijite, chanting slogans such as "There is no judgment except by Allah" and "Towards paradise," launched an assault on the army of Kufa. However, they were met with a barrage of heavenly arrows unleashed by Imam ʿAlī's forces, resulting in their swift and decisive defeat.[4] Finally, the battle, which commenced on Ṣafar 9, 38/July 18, 658, concluded quickly. According to al-Ṭabarī, the

1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 85-86.
2. Areas near Kufa.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 371.
4. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 169.

conflict lasted merely one hour.[1] As per the account provided by al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 292/905), the war lasted only two hours.[2] During that war, the leaders and notable figures of the Kharijite, including their commander ʿAbd Allāh b. Wahb, were slain, leaving only nine survivors, and each of these survivors fled to a different region.[3] Regarding the rapid end of the war and the defeat of the Kharijite army, it has been remarked, "It was as if someone commanded them to die, and they perished instantly."[4]

Casualties at Nahrawān

In ʿAlī's army, only seven individuals lost their lives. He commanded that the wounded among the Kharijite, totaling 400 individuals, be treated and returned to their families. The possessions found within the Kharijite's camp were distributed among the people, while ʿAlī (a) issued an order for the return of their personal belongings, as well as any male and female slaves, to their rightful owners.[5]

Return to Kufa

Upon his return to Kufa, Imam ʿAlī (a) delivered a speech, addressing the people. He proclaimed,

> "O people! It was I who blinded the eye of sedition when no one else dared to do so. Know that if I were not among you, battles would not have been waged against the pledge-breakers [*al-Nākithūn*, referring to the army of Jamal], the transgressors [*al-Qāsiṭūn*, referring to the army of Ṣiffīn], and those who deviated from the religion [*al-Māriqūn*, referring to the Kharijite]. Therefore, if you have any questions, ask me, for I will soon be killed ... I swear by the One who split the sea and created mankind, if you ask me about the events from today until the Day of Resurrection, and about any seditions that may mislead many and guide many, I will inform you of their instigators and leaders until the Day of Resurrection."[6]

Imam ʿAlī's Determination for Another Campaign against Muʿāwiya

Having successfully dealt with the Kharijite, ʿAlī (a) addressed his army in Nahrawān, offering praises to God. He then called upon his troops to prepare for a campaign against the Levant. However, certain individuals, including al-Ashʿath b. Qays, presented various

1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 86.
2. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 193.
3. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 4: 374-75.
4. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 169; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 87.
5. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 88.
6. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 193.

excuses such as a lack of military equipment and the exhaustion of the soldiers, suggesting a return to Kufa.[1] Nonetheless, the Kufa army proceeded towards Madain. In the al-Nukhayla region, ʿAlī (a) emphasized the importance of confronting the Levant, urging his soldiers to prepare for battle against the Levantine army. However, after a few days, the majority of his army returned to Kufa, leaving only ʿAlī (a) and a few prominent figures from Kufa in al-Nukhayla. Assessing the situation, ʿAlī (a) decided to abandon his plan to march towards the Levant and instead returned to Kufa.[2]

Observing the lack of motivation in his army to engage in combat against the Levantine forces, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) delivered a speech after a period of waiting. In his address, he criticized their lethargy and apathy towards war. He attributed the Kufa army's reluctance to fight Muʿāwiya's forces to their own fears and laziness. He emphasized that as their ruler, he had fulfilled his responsibilities by providing financial support, education, and guidance to the people. However, he also asserted his right to receive loyalty and obedience, which the people had failed to uphold. Finally, he warned them about the consequences of their indolence, stating that it would ultimately lead to death and plunder.[3] Despite his repeated admonitions, the people failed to take action in preparing the army, and some even went so far as to criticize Imam ʿAlī (a).[4]

Some attribute the failure to mobilize ʿAlī's army once again for combatting Muʿāwiya to various factors. These include the lack of unity among the people of Kufa, the absence of significant spoils for the warriors in previous battles, the efforts made by opponents and hypocrites to undermine the cause, the plots orchestrated by Muʿāwiya, the manipulation of certain influential figures within Iraqi families with promises of wealth or power, the principled policies of ʿAlī (a) himself, and a shift in the spirit and behavior of the people.[5]

In the sermons that have been transmitted from Imam ʿAlī (a) following the Battle of Nahrawān, it is evident that he expressed his deep disappointment with the lack of support from the majority of the people. Throughout these sermons, the Imam reproached the people for their indolence and apathy. In some instances, he warned them about the worldly consequences of their actions. In one particular sermon, he

1. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 379. After citing this account, al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) further mentions that due to his loud voice, al-Ashʿath b. Qays had a large following of people who would gather around him. As a result, Imam ʿAlī (a) bestowed upon him the epithet *ʿArf al-Nār*, meaning the Caller to Hell.

2. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 170; Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 211.

3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 34.

4. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 30.

5. Shahīdī, "Zīst-nāmi-yi Imām ʿAlī," 45.

cautioned the people about the potential dominance of Muʿāwiya over them. He prophesied the events that would later unfold during Muʿāwiya's seditions, highlighting that in such a situation, no rights would be observed, no respect would be upheld, the righteous would be slain, and even the reciters of the Quran would be compelled to flee. He emphasized that during those times, regrets would be of no avail.[1] In another sermon, the Imam issued a stern warning to the people about the worldly hellfire. He cautioned them that the Banū Umayya would not show any mercy and would ruthlessly plunder their wealth.[2]

In other remarks, ʿAlī (a) foretold a future where the people would experience humiliation and be subjected to oppressive rule enforced by the sword. He warned that this practice would become an entrenched tradition in governance. The unity among the people would erode, leading to tears shed due to injustice. Poverty would become a prevalent issue in their homes, and they would regret not having supported and aided ʿAlī (a).[3] Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) sought refuge in God from the harm inflicted upon him by the people. He criticized their disobedience and regarded them as the most wretched creatures of God. He expressed his belief that their vast numbers were of no use, as they proved to be the weakest of warriors. The Imam lamented the impossibility of establishing justice among such individuals and expressed his grievances to God regarding the scarcity of his loyal supporters. In one remark, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) stated that if he had as many helpers as the Muslims who fought in the Battle of Badr, namely 313 people, he would have confronted Muʿāwiya.[4]

Scattered Riots by the Kharijites

Following the Battle of Nahrawān, the Kharijite resumed their acts of rebellion against ʿAlī (a). These individuals were probably among those who had withdrawn from the battle prior to its commencement and had dispersed to various locations. One such figure was Ashras b. ʿAwf al-Shaybānī, who led a rebellion against ʿAlī (a) alongside 200 warriors in al-Daskara. In response, ʿAlī (a) sent a force of 300 fighters in Rabīʿ II, 38/September-October 658, to suppress the uprising. Subsequently, Hilāl b. ʿUllafa al-Rabābī and his brother Mujālid led a rebellion with 200 fighters. ʿAlī (a) managed to quell their riots by dispatching Miʿqal b. Qays al-Riyāḥī in Jumada I, 38/October-November

1. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 274-75.
2. Ibid., 1: 278-79.
3. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 171; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 381; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 193.
4. For the content and details of the sermon, see Rayshahrī, *Mawsūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib* (*a*), 7: 25-35.

658. Additionally, Al-Ashhab b. Bashīr al-Bajīlī, along with 180 individuals, also rose up against ʿAlī (a) in Jarjarāyā in the Jūkhā region[1] seeking revenge for Hilāl b. ʿUllafa. By deploying either Jāriya b. Qudāma al-Saʿdī or Ḥujr b. ʿAdī, the Imam successfully suppressed their rebellions. Subsequently, Saʿīd b. Qufl al-Taymī led a rebellion against ʿAlī (a), along with 200 warriors, in the vicinity of Madain, specifically in the Darzanjān region. Saʿd b. Masʿūd, acting on behalf of ʿAlī (a), confronted and countered them in Rajab, 38/December 658. Later, Abū Maryam al-Saʿdī al-Tamīmī, along with 400 men, the majority of whom were emancipated slaves (*mawālī*), instigated a riot near Kufa. In response, ʿAlī (a) dispatched Shurayḥ b. Hānī with 700 warriors, who defeated them. Two hundred of the rioters survived, and subsequently revolted once again, prompting ʿAlī (a) and Jāriya b. Qudāma to confront and overcome them. In Ramadan, 38/January-February 658, all but fifty of the rioters were killed. In one account, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) ordered that 40 of the wounded Kharijite be treated in Kufa until they recovered.[2]

Collapse of Egypt

As previously mentioned, when Qays b. Saʿd assumed the role of governor in Egypt, he displayed leniency towards those who did not pledge allegiance to him. He guaranteed their safety on the condition that they would not act against the government in Iraq. However, this approach by Qays weakened the Kufa front in Egypt against the forces from the Levant. As a result, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) decided to remove Qays from his position. Following Qays's removal, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr was appointed as the new governor of Egypt. Unlike Qays, he did not adopt a tolerant stance towards those who refused to pledge allegiance. He sent a message to them, stating that they must either pledge allegiance or leave the territories under his rule. These events occurred simultaneously with the Battle of Ṣiffīn, and the opponents in Egypt rejected all of Muḥammad's suggestions. The incidents that took place during the arbitration process provided the opponents with courage, and they sought to avenge the blood of ʿUthmān by engaging in acts of sabotage within the government of Egypt. Meanwhile, Muʿāwiya urged the opponents to weaken ʿAlī's appointed governor. He sent ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ with a powerful army to Egypt, and the opponents left Muḥammad's territory and joined forces with the Levantine army. This undermined Muḥammad's army and bolstered the strength of the Levantine forces. Furthermore, following these incidents, the Egyptians criticized Muḥammad and doubted his capability to rule Egypt due to his young age.

1. An area near present-day Baghdad.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 481-86.

These series of events led Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) to appoint Mālik al-Ashtar as the new governor of Egypt.[1]

Mālik al-Ashtar's Rule in Egypt

When the news of unrests in Egypt and Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr's failure to administer the affairs there reached ʿAlī (a), he introduced Mālik al-Ashtar al-Nakhaʿī as the best candidate to rule Egypt given his capability to control the conditions there. Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) summoned Mālik al-Ashtar, who was in the Naṣībayn region[2] at the time. On Rajab 5, 37/December 17, 657, ʿAlī (a) wrote a covenant with Mālik al-Ashtar and sent him to Egypt as the new governor.[3]

Amīr al-Muʾminīn's Letter to the People of Egypt

When Imam ʿAlī (a) sent Mālik al-Ashtar to govern Egypt, he wrote a letter intended for the people of Egypt. He entrusted Mālik with delivering the following message to them:

> "God sent Muḥammad (s) as warner for the world and witness to the truth of the Messengers. When he died, the Muslims quarreled over who was to succeed—by God, the thought had never entered my heart, never crossed my mind, that the Arabs would uproot the caliphate from Muḥammad's family, that they would seize it from me, and I was stunned when people rushed to So-and-So to pledge allegiance. I held back my hand, I withheld my pledge, until I saw that large numbers had apostatized from Islam and were calling for the eradication of Muḥammad's religion. I feared then that if I did not show public support for Islam and its people, I would see it breached or destroyed. That calamity would be far greater than losing my right to rule, a rule whose wares last for a few, short days, then cease to be, as a mirage evaporates or as clouds disperse. I rose to confront those challenges until falsehood ceased and disappeared and religion became calm and still.
>
> By God, if I were to face them alone while their legions filled the length of the earth, I would still not feel uneasy or afraid. I know that I am righteous, and my certainty is bequeathed by my Lord. I know that they stray while I walk the path of guidance. I long to meet God, I anticipate and expect his beautiful reward. What grieves me is the thought that this community could be ruled by the rash and depraved who take what belongs to God as their own property, treat his servants

1. For detailed information, see Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 254-56; Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 93; Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*, 2: 6-7; Yūsufī al-Gharawī, *Masūʿat al-Tārīkh al-Islāmī*, 5: 280-83.
2. A town in al-Jazīra in northern Iraq (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 5: 288).
3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 95.

like slaves, view the pious as enemies to be struck down and the wicked as allies, whose numbers include men who drank prohibited drinks, who were whipped under the aegis of Islam as punishment for their blatant crime, as well as those who did not accept Islam until they were bought for a paltry sum. If not, I would never go to the trouble to rouse, reprehend, gather, or goad you, but would consign you to your refusal and your tepid response. Do you not see that your borders shrink, your cities are conquered, your territories are seized, and your lands are attacked? March to fight your enemy, may God have mercy on you! Do not sink to the earth in languor, else you acknowledge your shame and accept dishonor, and your share will be the vilest and ugliest of all. The true warrior is ever wakeful. If you sleep, be aware that your enemy does not. Go in peace."[1]

Muʿāwiya's Plot and the Assassination of Mālik

Upon learning of Mālik's appointment as the governor of Egypt, Muʿāwiya became concerned. As a result, he composed a letter addressed to the tax agent of al-Qulzum (El Kulzom):[2] "Mālik al-Ashtar has been appointed as the governor of Egypt. If you manage to eliminate him, I assure you that I will not collect any taxes from you for the duration of my life. Therefore, employ whatever means necessary to achieve this goal."[3] Subsequently, the tax agent of al-Qulzum,[4] in an anonymous manner, intercepted Mālik on his journey. He invited Mālik to stay at his residence, where he deceitfully offered him a honey drink laced with poison, ultimately causing his demise. At the same time, Muʿāwiya addressed the people of the Levant, stating, "ʿAlī has sent Mālik al-Ashtar to govern Egypt. Let us pray to God for his elimination." When news of Mālik's demise reached him, Muʿāwiya delivered a sermon, remarking, "ʿĀlī had two strong arms: one was ʿAmmar, who was eliminated in the Battle of Ṣiffīn, and the other was Mālik al-Ashtar, who has now been eliminated." It is reported that Muʿāwiya remarked, "Indeed, God has soldiers in the form of honey."[5]

Upon receiving the news of Mālik's martyrdom, Imam ʿAlī (a) expressed deep sorrow, saying: "Mālik, O Mālik, O what a man! If he were a mountain, he would be a towering

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 62.

2. An area on the coasts of the Red Sea on the way from Iraq to Egypt (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 4: 378).

3. According to al-Masʿūdī (d. 346/957), the duration of the tax exemption was twenty years.

4. According to al-Ṭābarī, the name of tax agent in question was "al-Jāyistār."

5. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 259-60; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 194; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 95-96; Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 409-10; Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 81.

peak that no hoof could ascend, no bird fly over."[1] "O Mālik! The weepers should weep for you. Where can one find a counterpart to Mālik?!"[2]

The Fall of Egypt and the Martyrdom of Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr

Upon receiving news that Imam ʿAlī (a) had appointed Mālik al-Ashtar al-Nakhaʿī as the governor of Egypt, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr felt a sense of sadness. However, the Imam addressed Muḥammad in a letter, reassuring him that Mālik's appointment was not a reflection of his own weaknesses. Rather, it was a decision made to alleviate Muḥammad's responsibilities and assign him to a more peaceful region.[3] In response, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr composed a letter affirming his obedience to Amīr al-Muʾminīn(a).[4]

In those circumstances, Muʿāwiya grew concerned about potential threats from Egypt due to its proximity to the Levant and the majority of its population being critical of ʿUthmān. Additionally, he coveted the fertile and prosperous land of Egypt. Seeking advice from his companions, he exploited the pretext of seeking vengeance for ʿUthmān's death and dispatched individuals to Maslama b. Mukhallad and Muʿāwiya b. Ḥudayj, known seekers of vengeance for ʿUthmān in Egypt, to incite rebellion against Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr. Muʿāwiya promised power and authority to these two men, with the condition that they demanded Muʿāwiya to send an army. Consequently, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ led a force of 6,000 warriors towards Egypt. As they approached Egypt, ʿAmr managed to gain support from ʿUthmān's sympathizers residing there. Alongside the letter written by Muʿāwiya to Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, ʿAmr penned another letter warning him to save himself by abandoning Egypt. Muḥammad forwarded both letters to ʿAlī (a) and composed a letter to him, highlighting the weakness of his own army and the arrival of ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ in Egypt, thus urging the dispatch of reinforcements. In response, ʿAlī (a) promised to send reinforcements and urged Muḥammad to gather his supporters and resist the enemy. Consequently, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr dispatched an army of 2,000 warriors to confront ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ. In the meantime, ʿAmr sought reinforcements from Muʿāwiya. When the reinforcements arrived, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ engaged and defeated Muḥammad's army. Following the defeat, the Egyptian army retreated. With the assistance of Muʿāwiya b. Ḥudayj, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ eventually found Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr hiding in ruins. When Muḥammad requested water, Muʿāwiya b. Ḥudayj, accusing him

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 443.
2. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 194.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 34.
4. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 269-70.

of blocking water from reaching ʿUthmān, refused to provide any. A heated argument ensued between Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr and Muʿāwiya b. Ḥudayj, resulting in Muḥammad's enraged killing and the subsequent burning of his corpse.[1]

Shortly before these events, ʿAlī (a) had called upon the people to support Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr. He urged them to gather in the al-Jaraʿa region,[2] but no one accompanied him. The following day, ʿAlī (a) held discussions with prominent tribal leaders, and as a result, Kaʿb b. Mālik al-Arḥabī pledged his readiness with 2,000 soldiers. ʿAlī (a) sent him, along with 5,000 additional forces, to assist Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr. However, shortly after their departure, news reached ʿAlī (a) about Muḥammad's assassination, prompting him to recall Kaʿb and his forces. In a sermon, Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a) reproached the people for their lack of support, stating, "Know that Egypt has fallen into the hands of oppressors and transgressors." He then conveyed the news of Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr's martyrdom, praising his character and criticizing the way people had treated him. ʿAlī (a) emphasized that whenever he had requested assistance from the people, they had shown hesitation and placed him in difficult situations. He concluded by admonishing them for the delay in mobilizing an army to aid Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr.[3] With deep sorrow, he lamented Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr's loss, saying, "He was like a son to me, and for my sons and nephews, he was like a brother."[4] After some time, ʿAlī (a) composed a letter to ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, informing him of the martyrdom of Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr. In the letter, ʿAlī (a) described Muḥammad as "He was a sincere son, a diligent governor, a cutting sword, and a pillar of support," and reproached the people.[5]

When ʿAlī (a) became aware that, as a result of the unfolding events, people had started to criticize him and even began to praise Muʿāwiya for his political acumen, he expressed: "By God, Muʿāwiya is not more astute than I, but he deceives and lies. If I did not abhor deception, I would be the most cunning of people."[6]

1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 97-105.
2. A place between Kufa (*al-Najafa*) and al-Ḥīra in Iraq (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 2: 127-28).
3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 107-9.
4. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 194.
5. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 35, wisdom 235.
6. Ibid., sermon 200.

ʿAlī's Letter to Mālik

Imam ʿAlī's letter to Mālik al-Ashtar, which is documented as letter 53 in *Nahj al-Balāgha* and is also included in *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl* by Ibn Shuʿba (d. 381/991-92),[1] is considered one of the longest letters written by Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a). This letter served as a political directive from Imam ʿAlī (a), outlining his principles of governance. It contained instructions for Mālik to uphold justice, treat people with kindness, seek counsel from knowledgeable individuals in matters of governance, and more. The letter has consistently captured the attention of Muslim scholars, leading to numerous commentaries and translations.[2] In this section, we will outline the three main principles discussed in the letter: administrative, economic, and judicial policies.

Administrative Policies

In a section of the letter, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) emphasizes the importance of honoring one's promises, whether made to a friend or an enemy. He highlights that all people, despite their differences, universally value the sanctity of promises. The Imam (a) then proceeds to warn about the dire consequences of breaking one's promises, asserting the necessity of respecting treaties, even if they involve difficulties, because "Patience accompanied by hope for relief and a virtuous outcome is far better than deception accompanied by fear of the consequences."[3] In the letter to Mālik al-Ashtar, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) emphasizes the importance of implementing the rights of every individual, whether they are relatives or strangers. He acknowledges that prioritizing the rights of people may be challenging for rulers and may even cause harm to their own relatives. However, he asserts that enduring these difficulties will lead to positive and praiseworthy outcomes.[4]

Imam ʿAlī's advice to Mālik extends beyond these examples. It includes instructions on how to administer affairs, such as the recommendation to maintain order and the necessity of planning. In a specific section of the letter, ʿAlī (a) emphasizes the importance of timely action, stating: "Get through each day's work that very day—to each day its own tasks."[5] In another section, he cautions against hasty actions and warns

1. Ibn Shuʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 126-49. It should be noted that Ibn Shuʿba's version of the letter includes additions to what appears in *Nahj al-Balāgha*.
2. For more information, see Muḥammadī, "Kitāb-shināsī-yi ʿAhd-nāma-yi Imām ʿAlī (a) bi Mālik-i Ashtar."
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, 442-43.
4. Ibid., 441-42.
5. Ibid., 440.

against both laziness in carrying out tasks and stubbornness in matters where the outcomes are unknown.[1]

Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) advises Mālik to surround himself with individuals who fearlessly speak the truth. He emphasizes that rulers should steer clear of flatterers and instead seek the company of righteous individuals. He asserts that truthfulness and the rejection of flattery are key qualities that governors should possess.[2] Furthermore, Imam ʿAlī (a) warns that those who surround rulers can potentially tarnish both their reputation and the reputation of their government. He advises Mālik to maintain fairness in his treatment of people and to avoid any form of discrimination. Additionally, he prohibits Mālik from granting land or other gifts to his relatives and close companions.[3]

Selection and Treatment of Agents: Regarding the significance of the tasks entrusted to agents and their rights, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) emphasizes: "every one of them has a right on the ruler according to what is needed for his prosperity. The ruler cannot acquit himself of the obligations laid on him by Allah in this matter except by striving and seeking help from Allah and by training himself to adhere to the right and by enduring on that account all that is light or hard." He further notes that righteous agents are those who possess qualities such as chastity, patience, compassion towards the vulnerable, and firmness towards the powerful. Additionally, ʿAlī (a) advises selecting agents from righteous families and individuals with a strong Islamic background, renowned for their courage, generosity, and charitable nature.[4] Rulers must test potential agents, employing those who exhibit modesty and experience. These individuals are less driven by worldly desires and possess greater prudence.[5] Furthermore, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) advises the selection of agents based on their background and qualifications.[6] In another section, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) strictly prohibits Mālik from employing individuals who had previously collaborated with oppressors, adding that: "They will be more inclined to feel affection for you and less inclined to feel esteem for another."[7]

ʿAlī (a) advises Mālik to discreetly assign reliable, truthful, and loyal individuals to monitor the agents and ensure their trustworthiness and kindness.[8] One way to prevent

1. Ibid., 444.
2. Ibid., 430.
3. Ibid., 441.
4. Ibid., 432-33.
5. Ibid., 433.
6. Ibid., 437.
7. Ibid., 430.
8. Ibid., 435-36.

agents from engaging in financial corruption is to ensure their livelihood is taken care of. Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a) advises Mālik to increase the salaries of his agents, as this discourages them from coveting people's possessions. By doing so, if they were to betray the trust placed in them, they would have no valid excuses.[1]

The Importance of Security and Military Forces: Another crucial instruction provided by Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a) to Mālik al-Ashtar in letter 53 of *Nahj al-Balāgha* pertains to the role of military forces and how to approach enemies. He states: "Soldiers serve with God's permission as a fortress for the public, the ornament of the realm, the might of religion, and the path to security—the public can be sustained only through them."[2] He advises Mālik on the political treatment of enemies in the following manner: if the enemy calls for peace, do not reject it, as peace will bring comfort and relief to your army. However, during times of peace, caution must still be exercised in dealing with the enemy. Imam ʿAlī (a) further emphasizes the importance of honoring treaties and refraining from any violations.[3]

Imam ʿAlī (a) advises Mālik to treat his military staff with dignity and to inquire about their well-being, as this will enhance their perception of the governor. The Imam further discusses the qualities of good military commanders, including their attentiveness to the needs and concerns of their subordinates.[4]

Treating the People: Imam ʿAlī (a) emphasizes that people will genuinely desire the well-being of their governors only if they do not feel overwhelmed by the burdens of governance and are not fatigued by prolonged periods of rule. Imam ʿAlī (a) highlights the importance of how governors should treat their people, stating that praising their good deeds will strengthen the courageous individuals among them and motivate those who may be lagging behind.[5]

ʿAlī (a) advises Mālik to uphold fairness in his treatment of people, emphasizing that failure to do so would constitute an act of injustice. He warns that anyone who commits injustice will have God as his adversary.[6] Similarly, Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a) strictly forbids Mālik from shedding the blood of the innocent., stating: "Beware of spilling blood without legal cause. Nothing calls down God's punishment more swiftly, or has graver

1. Ibid., 435.
2. Ibid., 432.
3. Ibid., 442.
4. Ibid., 433.
5. Ibid., 433-34.
6. Ibid., 428-29.

consequences, or causes God's blessings to be taken away faster, or cuts your allotted lifespan shorter, than spilling blood without legal cause."[1]

In another section, Imam ʿAlī (a) emphasizes the importance of the governor's love for the people. He recommends that if the people make a mistake, the governor should forgive them, as he hopes for God's forgiveness in return: "People are of two kinds: they are either your brothers in faith or your peers in creation."[2]

Furthermore, it is essential for the governor to have good thoughts or a positive perception of the people. In relation to this, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) wrote to Mālik: "You should know that the most conducive thing for the good impression of the ruler on his subjects is that he should extend good behaviour towards them, lighten their hard ships, and avoid putting them to unbearable troubles."[3] In another section, the Imam (a) strictly prohibits Mālik from seeking out the flaws of others. He advises him to distance himself from those who engage in such behavior, as a governor should be even more inclined to conceal the flaws of his people than others.[4]

Given the significance of public satisfaction, Imam ʿAlī (a) asserts that adopting moderate and fair behaviors is the best course of action for a governor. This is because when the people are content with their governor, any dissatisfaction expressed by his close companions will be of little significance.[5] Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) emphasizes the importance of public satisfaction as follows: "Know that nothing helps build a stronger bond of trust between a ruler and his subjects than when he is good to them, lightens their burdens, and does not coerce them."[6]

Regarding the direct interaction between governors and people from different social classes, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) advises Mālik to set aside a specific time to address the concerns of the general public. This can be done by organizing an assembly where individuals can freely express their opinions to the governor without fear. As the Prophet (s) said: "A nation in which the weak are not given justice against the strong except by anxiously stammering will never be made holy." The Imam (a) then advises Mālik to personally intervene and address those issues of the people that his agents are unable to resolve.[7] He also notes that if the governor isolates himself from his subjects, it would be

1. Ibid., 443.
2. Ibid., 427-28.
3. Ibid., 431.
4. Ibid., 429.
5. Ibid., 429.
6. Ibid., 442.
7. Ibid., 439-40.

an unkind act towards them. By doing so, he would be unable to understand the issues and sufferings of the people, which would result in his inability to recognize the importance of these matters.[1]

Economic Policies

A section of Imam ʿAlī's letter to Mālik al-Ashtar touches upon the economic policies of a government, underscoring the importance of paying attention to businesspersons and individuals involved in industries, as well as the need to allocate taxes towards the growth and development of cities and to take care of the lower social classes.

The Imam (a) emphasizes the importance of monitoring businesspeople and establishing economic security within society. He advises Mālik to formulate policies that prevent hoarding and self-interested behaviors, and instead promote easy and fair transactions based on just standards.[2] Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) advises Mālik to prioritize the interests of tax-payers when allocating and spending the taxes collected. Furthermore, he emphasizes the importance of cultivating and developing fertile farmlands, as this would bring comfort to the people and contribute to the establishment of justice. ʿAlī (a) refers to the abundance of food supplies as the adornment and foundation of a strong government.[3] ʿAlī (a) advises Mālik to win the hearts of the poor and to seek information about their living conditions. He highlights that many impoverished individuals refrain from seeking assistance due to feelings of shame and concerns about their reputation.[4]

Judicial Policies

A section of letter 53 of *Nahj al-Balāgha* is dedicated to the judicial institution and the role of judges. Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) provides advice to Mālik al-Ashtar regarding the selection of judges, ensuring their economic and job security, as well as the importance of monitoring their performance.

Regarding the qualities of good judges, ʿAlī (a) mentions the importance of being impartial towards claimants, being willing to correct mistakes when new evidence emerges, having a commitment to truth and justice, conducting thorough analysis and contemplation before making rulings, not becoming bored by the claimants, resisting flattery, and avoiding personal biases towards any party. He acknowledges that

1. Ibid., 441.
2. Ibid., 438.
3. Ibid., 436-37.
4. Ibid., 438-39.

individuals possessing all these qualities are rare. ʿAlī (a) advises Mālik on the necessity of monitoring judges, ensuring their economic security, and respecting their position. This includes meeting the financial needs of judges and recognizing their importance within society. The Imam emphasizes the elevated status of judgeship, stating: "In recent times, our religion has become a prisoner in the hands of the wicked, who have abused it to further their passions, and who, through it, have sought worldly gain."[1]

The above provides a brief overview of Imam ʿAlī's letter to Mālik al-Ashtar. The topics discussed in this letter can serve as subjects for further specialized studies.

Lootings by Muʿāwiya's Army

During the late period of ʿAlī's r, between 38 and 40/658-61, incidents occurred where Muʿāwiya dispatched looters to areas under ʿAlī's control. The objective was to create insecurity and foster public dissatisfaction with ʿAlī's government. Dealing with this issue and preventing such disturbances became a significant concern for the military forces of the Kufan government. Consequently, Muʿāwiya managed to evade the threat of a military campaign from Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a). The account of these attacks is documented by Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Thaqafī al-Kūfī (d. 283/896) in his valuable book, *al-Ghārāt* (The Lootings).

Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī's Attack on Basra

After Mʿāwiya's conquest of Egypt and the killing of Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, a group of ʿUthmān's supporters (*ʿUthmāniyya*) in Basra wrote a letter to Mʿāwiya. In their letter, they expressed their congratulations on the event and urged him to launch a military campaign against Basra.[2] As a possible consequence of this letter and as a means to undermine Amīr al-Muʾminīn's government, Muʿāwiya dispatched ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥaḍramī to Basra in 38/658.[3]

In a letter to ʿAbd Allāh, Muʿāwiya informed him that the people of Basra held a similar view to the people of the Levant regarding the assassination of ʿUthmān. They believed that ʿUthmān was unjustly killed and were awaiting an opportunity to seek revenge for his blood. Muʿāwiya advised ʿAbd Allāh to highlight the unjust murder of ʿUthmān and encourage the people of Basra to seek vengeance. Additionally, he instructed ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥaḍramī to reside among the members of the Muḍar tribe and work towards winning the support of the Azd tribe. However, Muʿāwiya cautioned him

1. Ibid., 434-35.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 424.
3. Al-Thaqafī records his names as "ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿĀmir al-Khiḍramī."

to avoid the Rabīʿa tribe as they were inclined towards ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a).[1] Before these events, and at the same time as the martyrdom of Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, who was the governor of Basra, had departed from the city to join the army of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) in order to provide reinforcements to Egypt. In his absence, he had appointed Ziyād b. Abīh as his replacement.[2]

Upon his arrival in Basra, Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī delivered a speech in which he presented ʿUthmān as a leader of guidance and accused ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) of being his killer. The commander of the city's *shurṭa*,[3] who was appointed by ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, responded to Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī, saying,

> "You have brought us nothing but trouble. I swear by God that you are leading us down the same path that Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr took before. They came to us when both they and we had already pledged our allegiance to ʿAlī (a), and they forced us into division and conflict. But now, we are united under ʿAlī's leadership. He has removed obstacles and forgiven those who have sinned. Yet, you are calling us to dispute and division, so that we draw our swords against each other and Muʿāwiya becomes the ruler? I swear by God, even one day that ʿAlī (a) spent with the Messenger of God surpasses Muʿāwiya and his household."

Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī then read aloud Muʿāwiya's letter, which praised ʿUthmān's actions and encouraged the people of Basra to seek vengeance for him. He also informed them of Muʿāwiya's promise to follow the teachings of the Quran and the Prophet's traditions, as well as his intention to provide gifts to the people of Basra twice a year. As a result, the people of Basra were divided, with some choosing to join Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī.[4]

The people of Basra gradually began to align themselves with al-Ḥaḍramī, and Muʿāwiya's envoy started to gain more supporters. Ziyād b. Abīh, who was acting as the temporary ruler of Basra, became concerned about these developments. He called upon the influential figures of Basra who were supportive of ʿAlī's caliphate and sought their assistance. They pledged their support, as well as the support of their tribes, to Ziyād. Following the suggestion of Ṣabira b. Shaymān, a prominent supporter of ʿAlī (a) in Basra, Ziyād sought refuge in his house along with the treasury's funds.[5] He reported the events to Imam ʿAlī (a), who then sent Aʿyan b. Ḍubayʿa al-Mujāshiʿī to Basra with instructions

1. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 2: 373-75.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 110.
3. *Shurṭa* were officials responsible for maintaining security in the city, similar to modern-day police officers.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 424.
5. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 2: 389-90.

to issue an ultimatum to the people of Basra and disperse them. If Aʿyan failed to achieve this, he was ordered to engage in combat with them.[1]

Aʿyan delivered a sermon to the people of Basra in accordance with the instructions of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a). However, those who had aligned themselves with Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī responded by cursing and preparing for a confrontation. When the night fell, a group of individuals, including some believed to be from the Kharijite, launched a surprise attack on Aʿyan's residence during the night, martyring him while he was in bed.[2] Ziyād conveyed the news of Aʿyan b. Ḍubayʿa's martyrdom to Imam ʿAlī (a). In response, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) dispatched Jāriya b. Qudāma al-Saʿdī to Basra. Jāriya delivered sermons to different tribes and clans of Basra, and subsequently engaged in battle against Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī and his followers. Jāriya emerged victorious, defeating them.[3]

Muʿāwiya's Continued Looting in Iraq

In the year 39/659, Muʿāwiya sent al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays with a force of 3,000 warriors to raid the outskirts of Kufa. They indiscriminately killed Bedouins and, in the al-Thaʿlabiyya region,[4] plundered the belongings of the Hajj pilgrims. Furthermore, in the al-Quṭquṭāna region,[5] al-Ḍaḥḥāk also killed ʿAmr b. ʿUmays al-Dhuhalī, a companion of the Prophet (s).[6]

Upon learning about these raids, ʿAlī (a) delivered a sermon and called upon the people to gather their forces. However, he did not receive a favorable response from the people regarding the fight against the Levantine looters. In frustration, he exclaimed, "O people of Iraq! I wish I had one man from the Levant in place of every eight of you. Woe to those who fight for injustice and remain patient in doing so. Woe to you! Join me in battle, and if you wish, you can flee [from the battlefield]. I swear by God that I seek martyrdom, and it hovers above me [like a bird]."[7] After the Imam's speech, Ḥujr b. ʿAdī stood up and delivered a supportive speech for ʿAlī (a). Subsequently, 4,000 individuals were mobilized and set out to confront al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays. They encountered al-Ḍaḥḥāk's followers in the Tadmur area,[8] killing 19 of them. Two of the Imam's companions, ʿAbd

1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 111.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 482.
3. For more details on this event, see Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 423-36; Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 2: 273-412; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 110-13. It is worth noting that al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī do not attribute this attack to Muʿāwiya.
4. An area located in the last third of the path from Kufa to Mecca (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 2: 78).
5. An area located near Kufa from the desert direction (on the west) (Ibid., 4: 374).
6. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 135; ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, 4: 551.
7. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 195-96; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 271-72.
8. A city located in the desert of the Levant (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 2: 17).

al-Raḥmān and ʿAbd Allāh al-Ghāmidī, were martyred during the battle. Al-Ḍaḥḥāk himself managed to escape the battlefield under the cover of darkness.[1]

According to an account, when ʿAqīl b. Abī Ṭālib received news about al-Ḍaḥḥāk's plundering activities and the apathy of the people of Kufa, he dispatched ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿUbayd al-Azdī to express his support for ʿAlī (a). In response, ʿAlī (a) stated that neither a large number of followers would make him conceited, nor a small number of followers would make him afraid. He then informed ʿAqīl about al-Ḍaḥḥāk's escape and the defeat of his followers.[2]

In that very year, Muʿāwiya sent al-Nuʿmān b. Basḥīr with a force of 1,000 soldiers to the ʿAyn al-Tamr region.[3] Kaʿb b. Mālik al-Arḥabī, who was acting as ʿAlī's representative in that area, informed the Imam about the arrival of al-Nuʿmān and requested reinforcements. However, once again, the people of Kufa did not respond to ʿAlī's plea for assistance, and consequently the Imam (a) admonished them for their apathy. Following the speech, ʿAlī (a) returned to his home. However, ʿAdī b. Ḥātim addressed the people and emphasized that it was an unforgivable sin to refuse assistance to Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a). ʿAdī, along with 1,000 individuals from the Ṭayyiʾ tribe, pledged their readiness and went to join ʿAlī (a).[4] In response, ʿAlī (a) provided each volunteer with 700 dirhams and bolstered ʿAdī's army with an additional 1,000 individuals. He then dispatched them to pursue al-Nuʿmān b. Bashīr and his army. The army from Kufa pursued the attackers all the way to the borders of the Levant before eventually returning to Kufa.[5]

In the year 39/659, following Muʿāwiya's orders, a force of 6,000 warriors launched an attack on Hīt,[6] al-Anbar, and Madain. They arrived in the al-Anbar region, where they killed the ruler of the region, who was appointed by Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), along with 30 others, and proceeded to loot the possessions of the people. In response, ʿAlī (a) delivered a sermon expressing his grief over the plundering of the property belonging to both Muslims and non-Muslims in the region. He called upon the people to mobilize their forces, but only the members of the Hamdān tribe expressed their readiness. Therefore, ʿAlī (a) dispatched an army of 8,000 soldiers to pursue the looters, who were chased all

1. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 438; Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 2: 425-26; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 196.
2. Shrīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 36; Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 2: 428-35.
3. A city located west of Kufa, near al-Anbar (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 4: 176.).
4. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 195; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 134-35.
5. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 2: 455.
6. An area located near Baghdad, north of al-Anbar (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 5: 420-21).

the way to the Ṭayyiʾ and ʿĀnāt area.[1] Later on, ʿAlī (a) dispatched Hānī b. al-Khaṭṭāb to pursue the Levantine looters, chasing them all the way to the Qinnasrin area.[2]

In that year, Muʿāwiya dispatched a group of individuals to the al-Jazīra area.[3] Upon the request for help from ʿAlī's appointed ruler of the region, Kumayl b. Ziyād, who was in Hīt, came to his aid and successfully defeated the looters. He then reported the outcome of the battle to ʿAlī (a). Furthermore, the representative of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) advanced to Baalbek and Raqqa[4] in pursuit of a group of looters, achieving victory and sending a report of his success to ʿAlī (a).[5]

In another scheme, Muʿāwiya dispatched al-Ḥārith b. Nimr al-Tanūkhī to the al-Jazīra region. Al-Ḥārith imprisoned seven members of the Banū Taghlib tribe, who were followers of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), and transported them to the Levant. Subsequently, the prisoners from Taghlib were exchanged for previous captives of Muʿāwiya's army.[6]

Attacks by Muʿāwiya's Army on the Hijaz and Yemen

In the year 39/660, Muʿāwiya sent ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿada al-Fazārī, along with a force of 1,700 warriors, to carry out plundering activities and tax collection in the Tayma region.[7] Muʿāwiya instructed him to advance all the way towards Medina and Mecca. In response, ʿAlī (a) sent al-Musayyib b. Najaba al-Fazārī, along with 2,000 men from the Hamdān, Ṭayyiʾ, and other tribes, to confront ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿada. Al-Musayyib successfully defeated ʿAbd Allāh, but when he attempted to arrest him, ʿAbd Allāh stirred up tribal emotions and exploited kinship relations to escape from al-Musayyib's custody. Under the cover of night, he managed to return to the Levant. As a result, ʿAlī (a) reproached al-Musayyib b. Najaba for this incident. Subsequently, al-Musayyib was assigned the task of collecting zakat in Kufa.[8]

In the same year, Muʿāwiya dispatched Yazīd b. Shajara, along with a force of 3,000 individuals, as the commander of Hajj. Simultaneously, Qutham b. ʿAbbās served as the

1. Areas in northern Iraq, in close proximity to the Levant.

2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 27, letter 61, wisdom 261; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 441-45; Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 2: 464-503. "Qinnasrin (*Qinnaṣrīn*)" is a region in the Levant in close proximity to Homs (*al-Ḥimṣ*) (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 4: 403).

3. An area located north of Mosul (Ibid., 2: 138).

4. Areas in the Levant.

5. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 473-76; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 3: 379.

6. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 4: 224-25; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 3: 380.

7. An area situated to the north of the Hijaz and west of Iraq, along the Hajj route from the Levant (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 2: 67).

8. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 196-97; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 134-35.

commander of Hajj on behalf of Imam ʿAlī (a). Unbeknownst to anyone that he was representing Muʿāwiya, Yazīd b. Shajara entered Mecca on the first day of Dhu al-Hajjah. Qutham, lacking sufficient military forces and unable to engage in a military confrontation within the sacred precincts of Mecca, decided to leave the city. However, Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, a companion of the Prophet (s), intervened and prevented his departure, as Miʿqal b. Qays was on his way to Mecca as a representative of Imam ʿAlī (a). A division arose among the people of Mecca regarding whether Imam ʿAlī's representative or Muʿāwiya's representative should lead congregational prayers in Masjid al-Haram. Eventually, they reached an agreement to perform prayers behind Shayba b. ʿUthmān, an early companion of the Prophet (s). While on his journey to Mecca, in Wādī al-Qurā,[1] Miʿqal b. Qays encountered some of the supporters of Ibn Shajara in Wādī al-Qurā and subsequently took some of them captive.[2]

As Muʿāwiya-ordered plunders continued, in the year 40/660, Busr b. Abī Arṭāt led a force of 3,000 warriors to the Hijaz and Yemen, with the intention of spreading fear and terror among the people of Mecca and Medina. Upon reaching Medina, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, who was appointed as ʿAlī's governor of the city, fled and sought refuge with the Imam in Kufa. In Medina, Busr addressed the people, urging them to pledge allegiance to Muʿāwiya, and set fire to the houses of ʿAlī's supporters. He then proceeded to Mecca, where he coerced the people into pledging allegiance to Muʿāwiya. Subsequently, he turned his attention to Yemen. Upon his arrival, ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿAbbās appointed ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Madān as his successor and left for Kufa. Busr killed ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Madān and his son Mālik. Additionally, he killed ʿUbayd Allāh's two children, named ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and Qutham,[3] as well as a man from the Banū Kināna who had defended the two children. Furthermore, Busr targeted and killed a group of ʿAlī's supporters in Yemen.[4]

Upon learning about Busr's massacres and plundering, ʿAlī (a) delivered a sermon in which he criticized the people for their resistance to accepting guidance and their abandonment of wisdom and knowledge. The Imam emphasized that Muʿāwiya's

1. An are located in the northern Hijaz.

2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 461-64; Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 2: 504-12.

3. In a discussion about the children of ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, al-Khazrajī (d. 812/1409-10) notes that they were 20 and 8 years old. He also cites an account stating that their names were al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. Furthermore, al-Khazrajī highlights that 72 individuals of Iranian origin (*al-abnāʾ*) were killed while defending ʿUbayd Allāh's two sons at the hands of Busr. Additionally, he mentions the presence of the graves of the two sons of ʿUbayd Allāh, which are located in Sanaa, Yemen, and are now known as "Masjid al-Shahīdayn" (The Mosque of the Two Martyrs). This site has become a place of pilgrimage (Khazrajī, *al-ʿIqd al-fākhir*, 1: 579-80).

4. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 197-99; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 139-40.

objective in carrying out frequent attacks on various Islamic territories was to undermine and destroy the religion, as well as to humiliate Islam.[1] The Imam mobilized a force of 4,000 soldiers from Basra and Kufa in an attempt to apprehend Busr b. Abī Arṭāt. However, they were unable to catch up with him and could only engage and eliminate a few of his followers.[2]

The Imam's Renewed Determination to Fight Muʿāwiya

The final sermon of Imam ʿAlī (a) indicates his renewed determination to march to Ṣiffīn and confront Muʿāwiya in battle. In this sermon, after praising God and affirming His oneness, he reminded the people of the sacrifices made by his martyred companions. He called upon them to maintain piety and then rallied them to engage in jihad. Following the sermon, he organized his army, with Imam al-Ḥusayn, Qays b. Saʿd, and Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī among the commanders. However, before the army could depart, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muljam al-Murādī martyred Imam ʿAlī (a).[3]

ʿAlī's Martyrdom

As mentioned previously, in the year 39/660,[4] during the Hajj season, Yazīd b. Shajara entered Mecca on behalf of Muʿāwiya, calling upon the people to pledge allegiance to him. As a result of the ensuing disagreements, the decision was made to appoint Shayba b. ʿUthmān as the imam for congregational prayers in Masjid al-Haram. Following the conclusion of the Hajj season, a group of Kharijite gathered and expressed their discontent with the events that took place during the Hajj rituals. They proposed the elimination of both parties involved in the conflict, namely ʿAlī (a) and Muʿāwiya. Consequently, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muljam took upon himself the task of assassinating Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), al-Burak b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Tamīmī[5] undertook the killing of Muʿāwiya, and ʿAmr b. Bakr al-Tamīmī undertook the assassination of ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ.[6]

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1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 198; see also Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 25.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 458.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 182.
4. Al-Masʿūdī (d. 346/957) believes that this incident occurred in the year 40 AH.
5. Ibn Qutayba and al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) are of the belief that his name was al-Ḥajjāj b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ṣarīmī, known as al-Burak. However, al-Balādhurī records his father's name as ʿUbayd Allāh.
6. Among them, only Ibn Muljam succeeded in executing his plan. Al-Burak, who was tasked with assassinating Mu'awiyah, struck him with a sword as Mu'awiyah came out for the morning prayer. However, the blow landed on Mu'awiyah's back, and he survived the attack. Similarly, ʿAmr b. Bakr, who had gone to Egypt to kill ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, failed to carry out his mission because ʿAmr did not come out for the morning prayer that day (Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 181-82).

Ibn Muljam covertly entered Kufa and met with some remaining members of the Kharijite. However, due to fearing that his plans might be discovered, he kept the purpose of his journey a secret. During this time, he encountered Qaṭām bt. al-Akhḍar,[1] whose father and brother had been killed in the Battle of Nahrawān, and proposed marriage to her. Qaṭām included the assassination of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) as part of her *mahr* (dower). With Qaṭām's assistance, Ibn Muljam met with Wardān b. Mujālid and Shabīb b. Bajara, members of the Kharijite residing in Kufa. Together, they conspired to assassinate ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a). They planned to launch an attack on ʿAlī (a) in the Mosque of Kufa at dawn during the morning prayer, intending to martyr him.[2]

Al-Ashʿath b. Qays's Role in the Plot to Assassinate ʿAlī (a)

As mentioned earlier, al-Ashʿath b. Qays played a role in pressuring Imam ʿAlī (a) to accept the arbitration process and appoint Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿārī as the representative of Kufa in the arbitration meeting. Following these events, al-Ashʿath started to have tensions with Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a). Prior to this, during the Battle of Ṣiffīn, he had already been incited to oppose ʿAlī (a).[3] This time, he sowed discord in Kufa, attempting to challenge the Imam (a), which elicited explicit reactions from Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a).[4]

Al-Ashʿath b. Qays's animosity towards ʿAlī (a) had reached a point where he openly threatened to assassinate the Imam (a).[5] It appears that due to al-Ashʿath's prior enmity towards Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), when he became aware of Ibn Muljam's plan to assassinate the Imam (a), he saw it as an opportunity to seek revenge against him. Upon Ibn Muljam's arrival in Kufa, he resided in the house of al-Ashʿath b. Qays for a month, during which they prepared the initial stages of their nefarious conspiracy.[6] Furthermore, during the fateful dawn when the plot was executed, al-Ashʿath was beside Ibn Muljam. According to some accounts, Ibn Muljam and al-Ashʿath were engaged in conversation inside the mosque until morning. It was during this private conversation that al-Ashʿath

1. Ibn Qutayba and al-Balādhurī mention her name as "Qaṭām bt. ʿAlqama." However, Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845) and al-Ṭabarī record her father's name as al-Shajana (Shajana). On the other hand, Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣbahānī (d. 356/967) believes that she was Qaṭām bt. al-Akhḍar b. Shajana (see Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 25-26; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 179-80; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 487-88; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 143-45; Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 43-44, 45-47).

2. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 17-19; see also Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 411-12.

3. See Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 68-69.

4. For more details, see Nāzimiyān-fard, and Jahān-dīda, "Naqsh-i Ashʿath b. Qays dar mājarā-yi qatl-i Imām ʿAli (a)," 43-44.

5. Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 48; Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām*, 2: 40-41.

6. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 212.

abruptly exclaimed to Ibn Muljam, saying, "Arise, for the [light of] the morning will expose you."[1] Ḥujr b. ʿAdī witnessed this conversation and realized that Ibn Muljam intended to martyr ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a). Despite Ḥujr's attempts to inform ʿAlī (a) about the plot, he was unable to reach him in time. By the time Ḥujr arrived, ʿAlī (a) had already been struck by the fatal blow.[2]

According to certain accounts, some of the witnesses to the strike on ʿAlī (a) believed that al-Ashʿath b. Qays was the primary instigator behind ʿAlī's martyrdom.[3] As per a hadith from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) regarding the involvement of al-Ashʿath and his children in the killings of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), Imam al-Ḥasan (a), and Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), it is stated, "Indeed, al-Ashʿath b. Qays was complicit in the bloodshed of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a). His daughter Jaʿada poisoned [Imam] al-Ḥasan (a), and his son Muḥammad was involved in [the shedding of Imam] al-Ḥusayn's blood."[4] Historical accounts and narrative evidence confirm the involvement of al-Ashʿath b. Qays in plotting and carrying out the assassination of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a).[5]

The Attack on Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a)

In both Shia and Sunni sources of hadith, particularly in prominent firsthand Sunni sources, there are narrations from the Prophet (s) in which he prophesied the martyrdom of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) and describes his killer.[6] Moreover, as verified by these sources, ʿAlī (a) himself possessed knowledge about his killer and the manner in which he would be assassinated, and he had often made reference to this.[7] On the night of Ramadan 19,

1. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 493.
2. Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 47.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 494.
4. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 167.
5. For detailed information on other clues, see Nāzimiyān-fard, and Jahān-dīda, "Naqsh-i Ashʿath b. Qays dar mājarā-yi qatl-i Imām ʿAli (a)."
6. Among the hadiths found in Sunni sources, there are narrations in which the Prophet (s) prophesies the assassination of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) (See e.g., Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 2: 182; Tamīmī, *Bughyat al-bāḥith*, 2: 905; Abū Yaʿlā, *Musnad*, 4: 318; Ājurī, *al-Sharīʿa*, 4: 2100, 2102; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 2: 247; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 150; Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī, *Faḍāʾil al-Khulafāʾ*, 170). Additionally, in certain hadiths from the Prophet (s), the killer of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib is described as the most wretched among the people (See e.g., Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1: 600; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 25; Aḥmad b. Ḥanabal, *Musnad*, 30: 256; Ibn Abī Khaythama, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 1: 379; Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 4: 254; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan*, 7: 464).
7. In certain transmitted hadiths from Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), he foretold his own martyrdom (See e.g., Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 24, 25; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 7: 443, 444, 484; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 2: 110, 325, 450; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 501; ʿAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad, *al-Sunna*, 2: 630; Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 3: 92). Furthermore, according to some accounts, ʿAlī recited a verse of poetry directed towards Ibn Muljam al-Murādī, indicating that he knew he would be his would-be killer (Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 24). In another account, when

40/January 20, 661, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) remained awake until morning. When his daughter Umm Kulthūm asked him why he was staying up, he replied, "I will be killed when the morning arrives."[1] As Imam ʿAlī (a) was leaving his home to go to the mosque, the ducks in the courtyard of the house started quacking and attempted to impede his movement. Some individuals in the house tried to shoo them away from the Imam's path, but he told them, "Leave them be, for they are mourning."[2]

At the break of dawn on Ramadan 19/January 20, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) entered the mosque. As was his customary practice, upon entering the mosque, he awakened those who were asleep for the prayer.[3] The Imam (a) stood up to commence the prayer. Ibn Muljam launched a sudden attack, striking him on the head with a poisoned sword while he was in prostration.[4] At that very moment, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) exclaimed, "I swear by the Lord of the Kaaba that I have succeeded."[5] Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) was carried back home, surrounded by a crowd of people. They wept and cried out so intensely that they nearly die.[6]

Tolerance toward the Imprisoned Assassin

Later, Imam ʿAlī (a) commanded that Ibn Muljam be brought before him. Upon seeing him, the Imam inquired, "What drove you to commit this act?" Ibn Muljam responded, "For 40 days, I had been sharpening my sword and beseeching God's assistance to kill the most evil of individuals with it."[7] Regardless, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) ordered that Ibn Muljam be provided with good food and a comfortable bed.[8] ʿAlī (a) instructed his sons, Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), saying, "Place this captive in the prison. Provide him with water and food, and ensure his comfort during his imprisonment. If I survive, I will make a decision regarding him. If I wish, I can seek retributive punishment,

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Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) learned about Ibn Muljam's arrival in Kufa, he remarked, "Has he arrived? There is nothing left for me to do, and now the time has come" (Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 212).

1. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 16.

2. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 560; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *Maqtal Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, 27; Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 413; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 3: 388; Ibn al-Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 8: 13. In some narrations, it is stated that Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) said: "These are shouters and they will have mourners after them" (Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 212; Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 4: 277; Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 259).

3. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 26; Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 3: 899.

4. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 558; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *Maqtal Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, 30; Irbilī, *Kashf al-ghumma*, 1: 437.

5. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 180; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 488, 499; Ṭabrisī, *Iʿlām al-warā*, 87; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 9: 207.

6. Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 42: 289.

7. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 145.

8. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 27.

and if I choose, I can forgive him or accept a compensation. If I pass away, you shall make the decision. If you decide on retributive execution, do not mutilate his body."[1] In another account, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) stated regarding his assassin, "Give him from my food and from my drink."[2] When ʿAlī (a) was confined to his bed, he would consistently inquire about the well-being of his assassin, asking, "Have you provided food for your captive?"[3]

Imam ʿAlī's Will

When ʿAlī (a) was struck, the physicians of Kufa surrounded him, including a physician named Athīr b. ʿAmr al-Sakūnī, who was present at his bedside. After examining the wound, Athīr advised, "Prepare your will, for the enemy's strike has penetrated deeply." The Imam (a) requested a sheet of paper and ink in order to write his will.[4]

Imam ʿAlī (a) wrote two wills, one intended for the general public and the other specifically for his children and household:

In his will addressed to the people, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) commenced by offering them guidance. He then cautioned against associating partners with God and advised them to uphold the traditions of the Prophet (s). He urged them to reflect on death, as it is the destiny of all to rest beneath the earth.[5]

In the will addressed to his children and household, after advising them to uphold piety, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) provided them with specific instructions. These instructions included showing kindness towards orphans and neighbors, fulfilling the obligation of zakat, observing fasting during the month of Ramadan, engaging in jihad for the sake of God with one's life and wealth, supporting those who are oppressed, honoring and respecting the companions of the Prophet (s), treating women with consideration, maintaining the regular prayers, practicing tolerance towards others, promoting what is right and forbidding what is wrong, fostering unity, and upholding the rights of the Prophet's Household. In the final moments of his life, he repeatedly uttered the phrase "There is no god but Allah" until his noble soul transcended to the highest realm.[6]

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1. Ḥimyarī, *Qurb al-isnād*, 143.
2. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *Maqtal Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, 41-42.
3. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 4: 279.
4. Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 51.
5. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 299-300; see also Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 23.
6. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 7: 51-52; Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 47. In various sources, different wills are transmitted from Imam ʿAlī (a) (see Rayshahrī, *Masūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib* (*a*), 7: 254-63).

The Burial and the Concealed Location of the Imam's Grave

Before his martyrdom, ʿAlī (a) requested that some musk, which remained from the Prophet's *ḥanūṭ* (aroma),[1] be used to scent his body after his martyrdom.[2] The responsibility of performing the funeral washing and shrouding of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) was undertaken by Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and Imam al-Ḥusayn (a).[3] When ʿAlī's body was being washed, a sudden voice was heard, declaring, "Only take one side of the coffin, as the other will rise on its own."[4] The noble body of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) was laid to rest in the area of al-Ghariyyayn (al-Gharī) atop a hill behind the city of Kufa, just before the break of dawn.[5] During the burial of the Imam (a), only his sons Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, and ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib were in attendance.[6]

The burial place of Imam ʿAlī (a) was concealed until the imamate of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) (114-48/733-65).[7] Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022) posits that the reason for the prolonged concealment of Imam ʿAlī's burial site was due to the Banū Umayya's enmity towards Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a). There were concerns about potential encroachments upon the grave by the Umayyads.[8] On another account, the reason for the concealment of Imam ʿAlī's burial site was due to concerns over possible exhumation by the Kharijite.[9]

1. It was a fragrant substance applied to corpses in order to delay their decomposition. In Islamic jurisprudence, *ḥanūṭ* refers to the camphor that is rubbed on the forehead, palms, knees, and toes of the deceased body.

2. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 599.

3. Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, 6: 106.

4. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 457.

5. ʿAbd al-Karīm b. al-Ṭāwūs (d. 693/1266) provides a detailed account of Imam ʿAlī's burial in his book, *Farḥat al-Gharī fī taʿyīn qabr Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib ʿalayh al-salām fī l-Najaf* (The joy of al-Gharin on determining the grave of Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him, in Najaf).

6. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 24-25.

7. According to certain hadiths, Imam al-Ṣādiq informed a few of his trusted companions about the location of Amīr al-Muʾminīn's grave, and they visited the site (Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 456). In certain accounts, the public disclosure of the burial place of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib took place during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd, the Abbasid caliph (r: 170-93/786-809) (see Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 26-27).

8. Ibid., 1: 10.

9. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *Maqtal Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, 72.

Amīr al-Muʾminīn's Age and the Date of His Martyrdom

There are disagreements between Shiite and Sunni sources regarding the exact day of Amīr al-Muʾminīn's martyrdom. In many Shiite sources[1] and some Sunni sources,[2] it is believed that Imam ʿAlī (a) was martyred on the night of Ramadan 21/January 28. However, there is a consensus between Shiite and Sunni sources regarding the day of the week when he was martyred. According to all these sources, it is agreed that Imam ʿAlī (a) passed away on the eve of Friday, which is Thursday night.[3]

At the time of his martyrdom, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) was 63 years old, as stated in numerous sources[4] and widely recognized historically. Despite certain minority opinions, the widely accepted year of Amīr al-Muʾminīn's martyrdom is 40/661, as cited in both Shiite and Sunni sources.[5] Some have pointed to a consensus by all Muslims regarding the year of Amīr al-Muʾminīn's martyrdom.[6] There is a consensus among both Shiite and Sunni sources about the month of Amīr al-Muʾminīn's martyrdom. Regardless of certain minority opinions, it is universally agreed upon that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) was martyred in the month of Ramadan/January.[7]

Muʿāwiya's Hostility toward ʿAlī (a) after his Martyrdom

After reaching a peace treaty with Imam al-Ḥasan (a) in 41/661, Muʿāwiya wrote a letter to his appointed governors, explicitly stating: "I disassociate myself from anyone who narrates the virtues of Abū Turāb [i.e., ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a)] and his household."

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1. This specific date of Ramadan 21/January 28 is mentioned in Shiite sources and reliable hadiths (See e.g., Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 4: 154; Ḥimyarī, *Qurb al-isnād*, 167-68; Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 2: 508; Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, 1: 114). It is important to note that there are some other sources that mention the date of his martyrdom to be the night of Ramadan 23/January 30 (Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 7: 52; Ṭūsī, *K. al-Ghayba*, 195). However, these sources should be disregarded as they have weak chains of transmission and inconsistencies in their contents.

2. Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, 17; Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 54; Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 3: 1122; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 571; Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, 21: 275.

3. For Shīʿī sources, See e.g., Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 7: 52; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 9; Ṭūsī, *K. al-Ghayba*, 95; Ṭabrisī, *Tāj al-mawālīd*, 75. For Sunni sources, See e.g., Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 91; Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 3: 1122; Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 1: 146; Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, 21: 275. It is worth noting that, according to calendar calculations, Ramadan 21, 40 AH falls on a Thursday.

4. See e.g., Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 27, 6: 91; Abū Nuʿaym, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, 3: 374; Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 3: 1122; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 10, 12-13, 573, 577.

5. For Shīʿī sources, See e.g., Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 452, 7: 52; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 2: 356. For Sunni sources, See e.g., Ibn saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 91; Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 54.

6. Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī (d. 430/1038) writes, "Even those who are not well-versed in history and the general public do not make any mistakes in acknowledging that [ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib] was martyred in the year 40 AH" (Abū Nuʿaym, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, 3: 374).

7. For Shīʿī sources, See e.g., Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 452, 7: 51; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 9. For Sunni sources, See e.g., Ibn saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 91; Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, 17.

Consequently, in various regions, cities, and villages, preachers ascended the *minbars* (pulpits) to publicly disassociate from ʿAlī (a) and curse him.[1] Moreover, he wrote to al-Mughīra b. Shuʿba, instructing him to publicly denounce and highlight the perceived flaws of ʿAlī (a).[2] The tradition of cursing ʿAlī (a) on minbars became widespread. It is reported that Muʿāwiya once remarked, "[This tradition should continue so that] children grow up cursing ʿAlī, and the young grow old and the old pass away while cursing ʿAlī, without attributing any virtues to him."[3] The Umayyad government relied so heavily on this detestable tradition that Marwān b. al-Ḥakam (r. 64-65/684-85) declared that the Umayyad rule could not endure without the practice of cursing ʿAlī (a).[4]

This practice extended to the point where even hadith transmitters were apprehensive about mentioning ʿAlī's name within the chains of transmission of hadiths. Some of them would refer to him as "a man from the Quraysh" instead. Others would mention "a man from among the companions of the Messenger of God (s)," while some would use the name "Abū Zaynab" to allude to him.[5] When someone asked al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) how he could transmit hadiths directly from the Prophet (s) despite not having seen him, he replied, "If you hear me narrating a hadith directly from the Messenger of God (s), know that I am transmitting it through ʿAlī (a). For I live in a time where I cannot openly mention his name." It is important to note that al-Baṣrī lived during the r of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī, the Umayyad-appointed ruler of Iraq.[6]

None of these endeavors could erase the name of ʿAlī (a) from history, as he emerged like a sun from behind the dark clouds of animosity, illuminating the expanse of history with his light. In reference to the efforts of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī and the Umayyad rulers to establish the ʿUthmān recitation of the Quran, Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd remarks,

> "Indeed, al-Ḥajjāj and those who appointed him, such as ʿAbd al-Malik [b. Marwān] and al-Walīd [b. ʿAbd al-Malik], and the Umayyad [caliphs] before and after them were more concerned with downplaying or concealing the virtues of ʿAlī (a), his sons, and his Shias than with the issue of ʿUthmānī recitation. The existence of different recitations of the Quran would not undermine their rule or expose their shortcomings. However, the spread of the virtues of ʿAlī (a) and his sons and the revelation of their goodness would pose a threat to their rule. Hence,

1. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 11: 44.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 23.
3. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 4: 57.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 184.
5. Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 351.
6. Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, 6: 124.

they made great efforts to conceal the virtues of ʿAlī (a), forcing people to keep them hidden. However, God made the status of ʿAlī (a) and his sons more apparent than ever before, increased love for them, spread their memory far and wide, strengthened and clarified their evidence, and elevated their status. They [the Prophet's Household] ultimately gained more esteem through insults, and their memory remained firmly entrenched despite attempts to erase it. Every evil intended for them turned into a blessing. Consequently, a wealth of their backgrounds, virtues, and characteristics have reached us in a way unparalleled by other early figures of Islam. No one can compare to them. If these virtues were not as well-known as the qibla (prayer direction), just like the divine traditions that have been preserved among multitudes, we would not have received any of them."[1]

1. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 13: 223-24.

II. Articles

Imam ʿAlī (a) in the Words of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) and His Companions

Introduction

Undoubtedly, the life of ʿAlī (a) is not confined to the pages of historical sources alone. A significant portion of the information about his personality and lifestyle can be gleaned from the sayings of the Prophet (s), the Imams (a), and the companions of His Eminence (a). What follows is the result of a humble effort to explore other facets of Imam ʿAlī's (a) life.

In this section, we endeavor to delve into various hadith and historical sources to examine what others have said about ʿAlī (a). The following passages will portray ʿAlī (a) from the perspective of others and include some stories from his life.

Ultimately, this material aims to open a window into the life of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) that differs from the conventional biographical accounts.

Description of ʿAlī (a) in the words of Ahl al-Bayt (a)

The Messenger of God (s)

1. [The Prophet (s) addressed ʿAlī (a) saying:] "You are superior and great in this world and the Hereafter. Whoever loves you, loves me. Your friend is my friend, and your enemy is my enemy. Woe to him who shows enmity towards you after me."[1]

2. It has been narrated from Anas b. Mālik that he said: ... Indeed, I heard from the Messenger of God (s) who said: "O Anas, [do you] love ʿAlī?" I said: "O Messenger of God, by God, since you love him, I love him." [The Messenger of God (s)] said: "Indeed, if you love him, God will love you, and if you consider him an enemy, God will consider you an enemy, and if your Lord considers you an enemy, He will cast you into the Fire [of Hell]."[2]

3. The Messenger of God (s) said: "O ʿAlī, whoever loves you and then dies, has indeed died a martyr's death, and whoever loves you and his death has not yet come, is awaiting [martyrdom], and the sun does not rise and set upon him except that it brings forth for him provision and faith."[3]

4. [It has been narrated from] Anas b. Mālik [that he] said: I heard from the Messenger of God (s) that he said: "On the forehead of the believer's record [in the Hereafter] is the love of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib."[4]

5. It has been narrated from ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar that when some people [maliciously] questioned the Prophet (s) about ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), the Prophet (s) said with anger: "Why do some people speak ill of someone whose status and rank with God is like my status and rank? Know and be aware that whoever loves ʿAlī loves me, and may God be pleased with him, and whoever God is pleased with, He will reward him with Paradise. Know and be aware that whoever loves ʿAlī will not depart from this world unless he drinks from the *Kawthar* pool, eats from the *Ṭūbā* tree, and sees his place in Paradise. Know that whoever loves ʿAlī, his prayers, fasting, and night vigils will be accepted, and his supplications will be answered. Be aware that whoever loves ʿAlī, the angels of the heavens will seek forgiveness for him, and the eight gates of Paradise will be opened for him so that he may enter through whichever he wishes without reckoning. Know that whoever loves ʿAlī, God will give him his record in his right hand [on the Day of Judgment], and in the reckoning and trial, He will treat him like the prophets of God.

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1. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 642.
2. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 232.
3. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 306.
4. Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 151.

Whoever loves ʿAlī, God will ease his final moments before death and make his grave a garden from the gardens of Paradise ... Be aware that whoever loves ʿAlī, God will send the angel of death to him just as He sends it to His messengers, and He will remove the fear of Munkar and Nakīr from him, and He will make his face white, and He will place him beside Ḥamza, the master of the martyrs. Know that whoever loves ʿAlī, God will place wisdom in his heart, make the right and correct words flow from his tongue, and open the doors of His mercy to him ... Whoever loves ʿAlī, an angel from the Divine Throne will call out to him: 'O servant of God, resume your deeds, for God has forgiven your sins.' Know and be aware that whoever loves ʿAlī will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment with a luminous face like the moon. Be aware that whoever loves ʿAlī will have the crown of self-sufficiency placed on his head and the garment of honor upon his body..."[1]

6. The Messenger of God (s) said: "Whoever wishes to cling to 'the firmest handle for which there is no breaking' (Q 2:256), then let him hold fast to the wilāya (guardianship) of my brother and successor, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. Indeed, whoever loves him and accepts his wilāya will not perish [in the Hereafter], and whoever hates him and considers him an enemy will not be saved [in the Hereafter]."[2]

7. The Prophet (s) said: "Whoever loves ʿAlī and obeys him in this world, will enter upon me tomorrow [on the Day of Judgment] at the [*Kawthar*] pool and be placed in my rank in Paradise. Whoever shows enmity towards ʿAlī in this world and disobeys him, will neither see me nor will I see him on the Day of Judgment. He will be distanced from me and taken to the fire of Hell."[3]

8. It has been narrated from Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī that he said: I heard from the Messenger of God (s) that he said: "Indeed, there are qualities in ʿAlī that if one of them were in all people, it would suffice them for virtue [and superiority over others]."[4]

9. The Messenger of God (s) said, "ʿAlī [(a)] in the seventh heaven is like the sun on the earth [life-giving and warming], and in the world's sky, he is like the moon on the earth's nights [illuminating the darkness and guiding the lost]. God has given ʿAlī [(a)] a share of virtue, which if it were divided among [all] the people of the earth, everyone would receive a portion of it. The Almighty has granted him a share of understanding [and comprehension] that if it were distributed among the people of the earth, no one

1. Ṣadūq, Faḍāʾil al-Shīʿa, 3-5.
2. Ṣadūq, *Maʿānī l-akhbār*, 368-69.
3. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 298.
4. Ibid., 89.

would be deprived. His gentleness is similar to [Prophet] Lot [(a)], his character to John [(a)], his asceticism to the asceticism of Job [(a)], his generosity to the generosity of Abraham [(a)], his cheerfulness to the cheerfulness of Solomon [(a)], and his strength to the power of David [(a)]. He has a name that is written on all the veils of Paradise. My Lord gave me the good news of his existence … ʿAlī [(a)] is praised before the Truth and purified by the angels. [He] is my chosen one, my sincere companion, my supporter, my light, my paradise, and my close friend. My Lord gave me comfort through him. So, I asked my Lord not to take his life before mine, and after me, I asked God that he should depart from the world through martyrdom … I am from ʿAlī [(a)] and he is from me; whoever accepts his guardianship has accepted my guardianship. Loving ʿAlī [(a)] is a blessing, and following him is a virtue, which the angels have embraces and the righteous jinn have gathered around. No creature should walk on the earth after me unless he [i.e., ʿAlī (a)] is more honorable, more glorious, and more dignified in conduct. He is neither harsh nor hasty, nor is he inclined toward corruption or stubbornness. The earth carried him and honored him. After me, no one more honorable than him has been born of a mother, and wherever he has resided, it has been blessed. God has bestowed wisdom upon him and encompassed him with [great] understanding. The angels are his companions while he does not see them, and if [it were destined] for revelation to be given to someone other than me, it would undoubtedly be revealed to him. So, God adorned gatherings with him and made armies strong [and powerful], lands became fertile for him, and soldiers became strong. His position is like the position of the Kaaba; it is visited and does not go to visit anyone [people come to him, and he does not go to anyone]. His example is like the moon, illuminating the darkness, and like the sun, which when it rises, it sheds light. God has described him in His book, praised him in His verses, depicted his deeds therein and established his ranks. So, he is honorable, both in life and after death."[1]

Lady Fāṭima (a)

It has been narrated from Ibn ʿAbbās: Some women of the Muhajirūn and Anṣār went to visit [Lady] Fāṭima [(a)], the daughter of the Prophet (s), and said, "Peace be upon you, O daughter of the Prophet, how are you?" She said:

"By God, I have become such [that] I am disgusted with your world and I detest your men. I have cast them away after testing them, and I have become weary of them after testing them one by one. How ugly it is that intellect and opinion become deficient, and

1. Ibid., 8-9.

words become hollow, and spears become weak, and 'Surely evil is what they have sent ahead for their souls, as Allah is displeased with them and they shall remain in punishment [forever]' (Q 5:80). By God, I consider the fault to be theirs and the shame and disgrace upon them. So may good be far from the wrongdoers, and may they [always] be defeated. Woe to them, to which direction did they turn away [the caliphate] from Abū l-Ḥasan [i.e., ʿAlī (a)]? By God, [they did not do this] except to take revenge on him for the unpleasantness of his sword, the strength of his blows, and his fierceness in the way of God. By God, if everyone had consented to him taking the reins [of authority] that the Messenger of God (s) had placed in his hands, he would have carried it out in the best manner and guided them to the path of ease [from the worries of the world]; for he is the place where the message is placed, and like a mountain, the foundation of prophethood. He is the place of descent of Gabriel and has insight into the affairs of the world and the Hereafter and religion: 'Indeed, that is a manifest loss' (Q 39:15). By God, they would never have experienced any hardship, the riders [on the ship of his rule] would never have been afraid, he would have led them to a gushing spring [of worldly and otherworldly perfections] whose blessings would overflow [everywhere], and he would have quenched their thirst [from that spring] while he himself would not take from it except a small portion, enough to quench his thirst. And in this way, the blessings of the heavens and the earth would have poured upon them, and God would have judged them based on what they had earned."[1]

Imam al-Ḥasan (a)

It has been narrated from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), from Imam al-Bāqir (a), from Imam al-Sajjād (a): When Imam al-Ḥasan (a) decided to make peace with Muʿāwiya, [he said in a sermon introducing his fathers]:

"My father was the first person who responded to the call of God and His Messenger (s), and the first person who believed and affirmed God and His Messenger (s). Indeed, God has said in His Book which He revealed to His Messenger, 'Is he who stands on a manifest proof from his Lord, and whom a witness of his own [family] follows?' (Q 11:17), [in this verse] the Messenger of God (s) is the one who 'who stands on a manifest proof from his Lord' and my father is the 'witness of his own [family]' who followed him. When the Messenger of God (s) ordered him to go to Mecca to convey Surah al-Barāʾa (9), he addressed him and said, 'O ʿAlī, go for [conveying] it, for I have been ordered not to choose anyone for this task except myself or the one who is from me. That person is you,

1. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 374-75.

O ʿAlī.' The Messenger of God (s) [on another occasion] said to him, 'But you, O ʿAlī, are from me and I am from you, and you are the guardian (*walī*) of every believer after me.' So [ʿAlī (a)] was the first to affirm the Messenger of God (s) and defended him with his own life. The Prophet (s) always put him forward everywhere and sent him on every difficult task, [because] he trusted him and relied on him [to complete the task]. Because he knew that he was a well-wisher towards God and His Messenger (s) and was closer to God and His Messenger (s) than everyone else. God has said, 'And the Foremost Ones are the foremost ones: they are the ones brought near [to Allah]' (Q 56:10-11). My father was the foremost of the foremost in turning to God and His Messenger (s) and the closest of the close ones. God has said, 'Those of you who spent [their means] and fought before the victory are not equal [to others]. They are greater in rank than those who have spent and fought afterwards' (Q 57:10). My father was the first of them in Islam and faith, the first who migrated for the sake of God and His Messenger (s) and joined them, and the first who spent [in the way of God] in poverty and in abundance. [God Almighty] has said, 'And [also for] those who came in after them, who say, Our Lord, forgive us and our brethren who were our forerunners in the faith, and do not put any rancour in our hearts toward the faithful. Our Lord, You are indeed most kind and merciful.' (Q 59:10). Indeed, all nations ask God for forgiveness for him because he preceded everyone in faith in the Messenger of God (s) and no one believed before him. God has said, 'The early vanguard of the Emigrants and the Helpers and those who followed them in virtue' (Q 9:100). Thus, he is ahead of all the foremost ones. Just as God has favored the foremost over those who lag behind and come later, likewise He has favored the foremost of the foremost over the foremost themselves. God has said, 'Do you regard the providing of water to Hajj pilgrims and the maintenance of the Holy Mosque as similar [in worth] to someone who has faith in Allah and [believes in] the Last Day and wages jihad in the way of Allah?' (Q 9:19). My father was a believer in God and the Last Day, and truly a striver in the cause of God, and this verse was revealed in his honor."[1]

Imam al-Ḥusayn (a)

[During the last Hajj of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) before his departure to Karbala, as a large number of the companions of the Messenger of God (s) were present in Mecca, Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) rose to deliver a sermon and obtained their acknowledgment in this manner and appealed to them:] Among the appeals of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) was that he reminded them:

1. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 562-63.

"I ask you by God, do you know that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib [(a)] was the brother of the Messenger of God (s), when he established a pact of brotherhood among his companions and declared himself and ʿAlī (a) as brothers and said to him: 'You are my brother in this world and the Hereafter, and I am your brother'?" Everyone said, "Yes." He said, "I ask you by God, do you not know that the Messenger of God (s) purchased the site of his mosque and the surrounding houses, built ten houses in it, nine of which were for himself, and the tenth house, which was in the middle of them, he designated for ʿAlī (a), then he closed the doors of all the houses that opened to the mosque except the door of his house? To the extent that the speakers spoke [excessively] and the Prophet (s) said: 'I did not close your doors [of the houses] and did not leave his door open, but God ordered me to close your [houses] and leave his door open'." Everyone said, "Yes." He said, "Do you know that ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb tried to have a small window placed in his house, just big enough to see inside the mosque, but [the Messenger of God (s)] did not allow it and stood up to deliver a sermon and said: 'Indeed, God ordered [Prophet] Moses [(a)] to build a pure mosque and no one should live in it except himself, Aaron, and his two sons. Has God also ordered me to build a pure mosque and no one should live in it except me, my brother, and his two sons?'" Everyone said, "Yes." He said, "I ask you by God, do you not know that the Messenger of God (s) appointed him to guardianship [and leadership over you] on the day of Ghadīr Khum and said: 'Those present should inform those absent'?" Everyone said, "Yes." He said, "I ask you by God, do you not know that the Messenger of God (s) said to him before the Battle of Tabuk: 'You are to me as Aaron was to Moses, and you are the guardian [and leader] of every believer after me'?" Everyone said, "Yes." He said, "I ask you by God, do you not know that when the Messenger of God (s) called the Christians of Najran to Mubahala, he did not agree [to participate in Mubahala] except with him, his wife, and his two sons?" Everyone said, "Yes." He said, "I ask you by God, do you not know that [the Prophet (s)] gave him the banner in the Battle of Khaybar and said: 'I give it to the one whom God and His Messenger love, and he loves God and His Messenger, he always advances and does not flee, and God will bring about victory through his hands'?" Everyone said, "Yes." He said, "I ask you by God, do you not know that the Messenger of God (s) sent him to convey Surah al-Barāʾa (9) and said: 'No one will convey it on my behalf except me or someone who is from me'?" Everyone said, "Yes." He said, "Do you not know that the Messenger of God (s) would always face a difficult event, except that he would put him forward, and he would never call him by his name except to say: 'O brother' or [to say]: 'Call my brother'?" Everyone said, "Yes." He said, "I ask you by God, do you not know that when the Prophet (s) sat to judge between

him, Jaʿfar, and Zayd, he said to him: 'O ʿAlī, you are from me and I am from you, and you are the guardian [and leader] of all believers after me'?" Everyone said, "Yes." He said, "Do you not know that [ʿAlī (a)] had a special time with the Messenger of God (s) every day and night, and when ʿAlī (a) would ask, he would answer him, and when he would remain silent, [the Prophet (s)] himself would start speaking [and inform him of divine knowledge]?" Everyone said, "Yes." He said, "Do you not know that the Messenger of God (s) preferred him over Jaʿfar and Ḥamza when he said to [his daughter] Fāṭima (a): 'I have married you to the best of my household, the first Muslim among them, the most forbearing and knowledgeable of them'?" Everyone said, "Yes." He said, "Do you not know that the Messenger of God (s) said: 'I am the master of the children of Adam [(a)], my brother ʿAlī [(a)] is the master of the Arabs, Fāṭima [(a)] is the master of the women of Paradise, and my sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn [(a)] are the masters of the youth of Paradise'?" Everyone said, "Yes." He said, "Do you not know that the Messenger of God (s) ordered him to wash him [after his death] and informed him that Gabriel would help him in this task?" Everyone said, "Yes." He said, "Do you not know that the Messenger of God (s) said in the last sermon he delivered: 'O people, I have left among you two precious things: the Book of God and my Ahl al-Bayt, so hold on to them [and always remain attached to them] so that you will never go astray'?" Everyone said, "Yes." [Imam al-Ḥusayn (a)] did not leave anything of what was said in honor of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) in particular and in honor of the Ahl al-Bayt of the Messenger of God (s), which God revealed in the Quran or uttered on the tongue of the Prophet (s), except that he obtained their acknowledgment [of its truth]. [After each statement] the companions of the Messenger of God (s) would say, "Yes, we have heard this statement [from the Prophet (s)]," and the Tābiʿūn would say, "[Yes, this statement] has been reported to me by so-and-so and so-and-so, who are trustworthy." After that, Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) obtained their acknowledgment of this hadith of the Prophet (s): "Whoever thinks that he loves me while he hates ʿAlī [(a)] has indeed lied. No one loves me while hating ʿAlī." Someone said to the Prophet (s), "O Messenger of God, how is this so?" He said, "Because he is from me and I am from him. Whoever loves him loves me, and whoever loves me loves God. Whoever hates him hates me, and whoever hates me hates God." Everyone said, "Yes, we have heard this [hadith]," and then they all dispersed.[1]

1. Hilālī, *K. Sulaym*, 2: 790-93.

Imam al-Sajjād (a)

1. Imam al-Sajjād (a) narrated: "[One day] the Commander of the Faithful (a) performed the morning prayer and remained on his prayer rug until the sun's rays appeared. Then he turned to the people and said, 'By God, I saw people who 'spend the night for their Lord, prostrating and standing [in worship]' (Q 25:64), their heads and knees constantly rubbing [on the ground in prayer], and it was as if they constantly heard the sound of the breaths of the fire of Hell in their ears. When God was mentioned near them, they would tremble like [dry] trees [in the wind]. [They were so detached from the world and all that is in it,] as if they were dead [among the people].' [The Imam (a), after these words] got up, and until the time of his martyrdom, he was never seen smiling."[1]

2. [Imam al-Sajjād (a), in his sermon after the event of Karbala, which he delivered in Damascus in the presence of Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya, said:]

"I am the son of ʿAlī al-Murtaḍā, the one who rubbed the noses of the people in the dust of humiliation until they said, 'There is no god but Allah.' I am the son of the one who fought before the Messenger of God (s) with two swords, attacked with two spears, performed two migrations, participated in two pledges of allegiance, participated in the battles of Badr and Ḥunayn, and never disbelieved in God for a moment. I am the son of the righteous of the believers,[2] the inheritor of the prophets, the destroyer of the atheists, the commander and leader of the Muslims, the adornment of the worshippers, the leader of those who fear [God], the most patient of the patient, the best of those who rise from among the close ones of the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds. I am the son of the one who was supported by Gabriel and aided by Michael. I am the son of the guardian of the sanctity of the Muslims, the killer of those who left the religion and broke the covenant and turned away from God's mercy,[3] the one who fought against his enemies and the most honorable of Quraysh who walked on the earth, the first of the believers who responded to the call of God and His Messenger and was heard, the first of the foremost of the foremost, the defeater of the aggressors and the destroyer of the polytheists, the arrow released from the divine bow towards the hypocrites, the tongue of wisdom of the worshippers, the supporter of God's religion and the guardian of the divine command, the garden of divine wisdom and His storehouse of knowledge. He was generous and openhanded, noble and joyful, pure and of noble descent, content and upright, bold and

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 236.

2. Referring to the same description in verse 4 of Surah al-Taḥrīm (66).

3. This part refers to Imam ʿAlī's (a) battles with the Kharijite, the oath-breakers of Jamal, and Muʿāwiya in Ṣiffīn.

courageous, patient and fasting, refined and devout … he is my grandfather, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib."[1]

Imam al-Bāqir (a)

1. "A man came to the Messenger of God (s) and said: 'O Messenger of God, is everyone who says 'There is no god but Allah' a believer?' [The Prophet (s)] said: '… Verily, you will not enter Paradise unless you love me. Whoever imagines that he loves me while having enmity towards this person is lying.' The person the Prophet (s) referred to was ʿAlī (a)."[2]

2. "God Almighty did not place the love of ʿAlī (a) in the heart of anyone except that when one of his feet slipped [into disobedience], his other foot remained firm [on the path of truth]."[3]

3. "The Commander of the Faithful (a) ordered [his servant] Qanbar to carry out the prescribed punishment (*ḥadd*) on a person, but Qanbar struck the person three extra lashes. Because of this action, [and because this incident was a violation of that person's rights,] ʿAlī (a) inflicted three lashes on Qanbar in retaliation for his action."[4]

4. "Indeed, ʿAlī (a) freed many slaves [for the sake of God]."[5]

5. "The Commander of the Faithful (a) would go out of his house on hot summer days to fulfill his [life's] needs, which others could have done for him, because he wanted God Almighty to see him while he was putting himself through hardship in seeking lawful sustenance."[6]

6. "'Alī (a) would feed the people in Kufa with bread and meat, while he himself had a meal separate from others. So someone among the people said, 'Let us see what the food of the Commander of the Faithful is.' They looked in on him, and behold — his food was a dish of soaked bread with oil, topped with ʿAjwa dates.[7] That was his meal, and the ʿAjwa dates used to be brought to him from Medina."[8]

7. "Your companion [ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a)] used to sit like servants and his food intake was like that of slaves. He would feed people wheat bread and meat, and then he would go home and eat barley bread and olive oil. If he wanted to buy a shirt, he would let his

1. Majlisī, *Biḥār al-amwār*, 45: 138-39.
2. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 269.
3. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 133.
4. Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, 10: 148.
5. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 6: 181.
6. Ḥur al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasā'il*, 3: 163.
7. ʿAjwa dates are a type of date that is cultivated in the Hijaz and is specific to that region (Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, 13: 31).
8. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 56.

servant choose the best one, then he would wear the other one. Because the sleeves were longer than his hands or the length was longer than his heels, [in order to dress like the poor] he would shorten it. He was never faced with two tasks that were pleasing to God, except that he would choose the hardest one on his body. He ruled over the people for [about] five years, but he did not put one brick on top of another and did not build a house for himself in this world, nor did he take land as a grant, nor did he leave behind gold or silver, except 700 dirhams, which was the remainder of his share from the treasury, and he wanted to hire a servant for his family. No one is able to act like him, not even ʿAli b. al-Ḥusayn (a) [who is famous for the abundance and intensity of his worship], because when he looked at a passage from his [i.e., Imam ʿAlī (a)] books [in which there was the quality and manner of prayer], he would hit his hand on the ground and [with regret] say: 'Who can bear this [action]?!'"[1]

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a)

1. "Indeed, [ʿAlī (a)] freed a thousand slaves for the sake of God, while his hand was calloused [from working hard to earn the money to purchase them]."[2]

2. "The Commander of the Faithful, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), endowed a house that he had in Medina in the neighborhood of Banū Zurayq."[3]

3. "How can a group be reluctant to perform good deeds, while ʿAlī (a), despite being a [true] servant of God and having Paradise guaranteed for him, strived extensively to gain closeness to God [through good deeds] and endowed [many lands] as charity for the poor?!'"[4]

4. "'Alī (a) was the most similar of people to the Messenger of God (s) in terms of food and behavior. He himself would eat bread and olive oil, while he would feed people bread and meat. ʿAlī (a) [with his own hands] would draw water from the well and gather firewood, and Fāṭima (a) [herself] would grind the flour, bake bread, and [with her own hands] patch clothes."[5]

5. "The Commander of the Faithful (a) was accompanied by a *dhimmī*[6] man on the road. The dhimmi [addressing the Imam (a)] said, 'Where are you headed, O servant of

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 130-31.
2. Ibid., 8: 165.
3. Ṣadūq, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, 4: 248.
4. Maḥmūdī, *al-Uṣūl al-sitta ʿashar*, 232.
5. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 165.
6. "Dhimmī" refers to non-Muslims who are permitted to live among Muslims in Islamic lands in exchange for paying a tax (*jizya*) (see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, 12: 221).

God?' The Imam (a) said, 'Kufa.' When [they reached a fork in the road where] their paths diverged, the Commander of the Faithful (a) accompanied the dhimmi. He said to the Imam (a), 'Didn't you say that your destination was Kufa?' The Imam (a) said, 'Yes.' The dhimmi said, '[Then] why [did you leave your path and] accompany me?' The Commander of the Faithful (a) said, 'The perfection of good companionship is that one accompanies their companion for a while. Our Prophet (s) has commanded us in this way.' The dhimmi [in astonishment] said, 'Did [your Prophet] really say that?' The Imam (a) said, 'Yes.' The dhimmi said, 'Undoubtedly, whoever follows him is because of his noble deeds. I take you as a witness that I have become of your religion.' That person went with the Commander of the Faithful (a) to Kufa, and when he became aware of the Imam's (a) identity, he declared his Islam."[1]

6. "Qanbar, the servant of ʿAlī (a), loved him very much, and whenever the Imam (a) would leave the house, [to protect him,] he would gird on a sword and follow behind the Imam (a). One night, [the Imam (a)] saw him and said, 'O Qanbar, what are you doing?' He said, 'I came to follow behind you, O Commander of the Faithful.' He said, 'Woe to you, are you guarding me from the people of the sky, or from the people of the earth?' He said, 'No, rather [I want to protect you from] the people of the earth.' He said, 'Indeed, the people of the earth cannot harm me except by the permission of God in the sky, so return.' [Qanbar] returned."[2]

7. "The Commander of the Faithful (a) sent five camel-loads of dates to a person. That person was someone who, despite his need for the Imam's (a) gifts due to his frequent hosting [and financial need], would not ask for anything from ʿAlī (a) or anyone else. One of the people [referring to sending dates to that person] said to the Commander of the Faithful (a), 'By God, one camel-load would have been enough for so-and-so, and he did not ask you for anything.' The Imam (a) said, 'May God not increase the likes of you among the believers. I give, and you are stingy? I swear to God [be fair!], if I do not give except to someone who asks, then in return for what He has given, I have not given him anything. Because I have forced him to spend his dignity [in expressing his request for help, a dignity] that is only [worthy] to be shed for my God and his God during worship and asking for his needs. Whoever does this to his Muslim brother, while knowing that he is worthy of help and goodness, God Almighty will never confirm [and answer] his

1. Ḥimyarī, *Qurb al-isnād*, 10-11.
2. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 59.

prayer. Because he asks God for Paradise with his tongue, while he is stingy towards God with his meager wealth.'"[1]

8. "[ʿAlī (a)], as long as he was among you, would only sustain himself from his own labor, [sustenance] that was sent to him from [the produce of his personal properties] in Medina. When he would prepare *sawīq*[2] for his food, he would seal it in a container so that [unintentionally] nothing from others would be added to it. Who is more ascetic than ʿAlī (a) with respect to the world?"[3]

9. "When [ʿAlī (a)] would stand for prayer and say, 'Indeed I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth, as a Hanif, and I am not one of the polytheists' (Q 6:79), the color of his face would change so much that one could see [the humility] on his face."[4]

10. "'Alī (a) had a room [in his house] in which there was nothing but a mat, a sword, and a Quran, and in it, he would stand for prayer."[5]

11. "The Commander of the Faithful (a) was a man who prayed a lot."[6]

12. "Whenever the Commander of the Faithful (a) was distressed by an unpleasant event, he would take refuge in prayer."[7]

13. "I swear by God, who took the soul of ʿAlī (a) to Himself, that he never benefited from unlawful wealth, whether small or large, until he passed away from this world. He was never faced with two tasks, in both of which there was obedience to God, except that he would choose the hardest one on his body, and never did a difficult and severe matter arise for the Messenger of God (s) except that he would send ʿAlī (a) ahead of him because of his trust in him. In the [Muslim] nation after the Prophet (s), no one was able to act [in worship] like the Messenger of God (s) except ʿAlī (a). He used to worship as if he saw Paradise and Hell before him. He freed a thousand slaves with his own wealth in the way of God, [all of which were from] the wealth that his hands had become calloused and sweat had formed on his forehead to earn. [He did this] to gain the pleasure of God and to be safe from the fire [of His punishment]. His strength was nothing but vinegar and olive oil, and the sweetness of his table was nothing but dates, that is, if they were

1. Ibid., 4: 22-23.
2. *Sawīq* is wheat or barley flour that is roasted over a fire (Azdī, *K. al-Mā'*, 2: 685).
3. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 53-54.
4. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 4: 110.
5. Barqī, *al-Maḥāsin*, 2: 612.
6. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 468.
7. Ḥur al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasā'il*, 8: 138.

available. His clothes were [like those of the poor] made of linen, and because they were long, he would shorten them."[1]

Imam al-Kāẓim (a)

[Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl narrated:] I asked Imam al-Kāẓim (a) about the verse, "Is he who walks prone on his face better guided, or he who walks upright on a straight path?" (Q 67:22), he said, "Indeed, God has likened the one who deviates from the guardianship of ʿAlī [(a)] to 'who walks prone on his face' and [never] be guided to the divine command, and has likened the one who follows him [i.e., Imam ʿAlī (a)] to 'who walks upright on a straight path.' [The meaning of] 'straight path' (*ṣirāṭin mustaqīm*) is the Commander of the Faithful (a)." [I asked about this verse:] "it is indeed the speech of a noble apostle" (Q 69:40), he said, "It means the [word] of Gabriel from God regarding the guardianship of ʿAlī (a)." [I asked about this verse:] "and it is not the speech of a poet. Little is the faith that you have!" (Q 69:41), he said, "[Some of the companions] said that Muḥammad [(s)] was lying about God, and God did not command him with this concerning ʿAlī [(a)]. So, God revealed [a verse from] the Quran and stated that the guardianship of ʿAlī [(a)] is Gradually sent down from the Lord of all the worlds. Had he [i.e, Muḥammad (s)][2] faked any sayings in Our name, We would have surely seized him by the right hand' (Q 69:43-45). Then God continued and said that the guardianship of ʿAlī [(a)] is 'Indeed it is a reminder for the Godwary. Indeed We know that there are some among you who deny [it].' (Q 69:48-49). Indeed, his guardianship is 'indeed certain truth' (Q 69:51). 'So [O Muḥammad][3] celebrate the Name of your Lord, the All-supreme' (Q 69:52), [God] says: 'Thank your Lord who has bestowed upon you this great virtue.'" [I asked about this verse:] "When we heard the [message of] guidance, we believed in it" (Q 72:13), he said, "[The meaning of] 'guidance' is guardianship, and [the meaning of] 'we believed in it' is that we turned to our master. So, whoever turns to the guardianship of his master, 'will fear neither privation nor oppression' (Q 72:13)." I said, "Has [this explanatory statement] been revealed?" He said, "No, [what was mentioned about guardianship] is the interpretation (*taʾwīl*) [of the verses]."[4]

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 163-64.
2. This phrase is the saying of Imam al-Kāẓim (a).
3. This phrase is the saying of Imam al-Kāẓim (a).
4. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 433.

Imam al-Riḍā

1. "Someone invited the Commander of the Faithful (a) [to his house]. The Imam (a) said, 'I will accept your invitation on the condition that you guarantee to do three things.' The person said, 'What are those three things, O Commander of the Faithful?' He said, 'Do not prepare anything for me from outside the house, bring me whatever you have in the house, and do not trouble your family [to host me].' The host said, 'I will do these things,' and the Imam (a) accepted his invitation."[1]

2. Al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Faḍḍāl narrated: I asked Imam al-Riḍā (a) about the Commander of the Faithful (a) [and said]: "While people knew the virtues, background, and position of ʿAlī (a) with the Messenger of God (s), how did they turn away [the caliphate] from him and give it to another?" He said, "Despite their knowledge of these virtues, they only separated their path from him because he had put many of their fathers, grandfathers, brothers, uncles, maternal uncles, and close relatives, who were enemies of Islam, to the sword. They held a grudge against him for this reason and did not want him to take control of their affairs; there was nothing else in their hearts. No one was like him in jihad before the Messenger of God (s) [and fighting against the polytheists], and for this reason, they turned away from him and inclined towards another."[2]

Imam al-Jawād (a)

ʿAlī b. Asbāṭ narrated: I said to Imam al-Jawād (a), "My master, people do not like your young age." He said, "Why do they not like it for me? By God, God said to His Prophet (s): 'Say, This is my way. I summon to Allah with insight—I and he who follows me.' (Q 12:108). This verse was revealed while only ʿAlī (a) was following him and [he was about] nine years old, and I am also nine years old."[3]

Imam al-Hādī (a)

[Imam al-Hādī (a), in parts of his response to the letter of some Shiʿites regarding predestination and free will, wrote:]

"From ʿAlī b. Muḥammad, peace be upon you and whoever follows the guidance; your letter reached me, and I understood what differences exist in your religion … [The Messenger of God (s)] said: 'I have left among you two precious things: the Book of God and my Ahl al-Bayt; when you adhere to them, you will never go astray, and the two will

1. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 1: 189.
2. Ṣadūq, *ʿUyūnu akhbār al-Riḍā* (*a*), 2: 81.
3. Qummī, *Tafsīr*, 1: 358.

not be separated from each other until they come to me [on the Day of Judgment and] by the side of the Pool [of *Kawthar*].' Since we found evidence in the Quran for this hadith, including this verse: 'Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down. Whoever takes for his guardians Allah, His Apostle and the faithful [should know that] the confederates of Allah are indeed the victorious.' (Q 5:55-56). [And as] the general populace have also narrated reports in this regard that the Commander of the Faithful (a) gave his ring as charity while bowing, and God revealed the verse in honor of this act, and since we found that the Messenger of God (s) said: 'Whoever I am his master, then ʿAlī is his master,' and also said: '[O ʿAlī (a)] you are to me as Aaron was to Moses, except that there is no prophet after me,' we also found that the Prophet (s) said: "Alī is the one who will fulfill my religion and my promise, and he will be my successor among you after me.' [The conclusion is that] the first hadith [i.e., the hadith of *Thaqalayn*] is a sound hadith on which there is consensus and no disagreement, as it is consistent with the Book of God. So, since the Quran testified to its authenticity and the evidence [of another hadith confirmed it], it is necessary for the entire Ummah to acknowledge [its correctness] out of necessity, because the evidence [of the authenticity] of these hadiths in the Quran is clear and the Quran is consistent with it. [In addition], sound hadiths from the Messenger of God (s) have been narrated through the truthful [Imams (a)] which trustworthy and famous individuals [from the Ahl al-Sunnah] have also narrated, so [on this basis], adhering to these hadiths and following them is an obligatory duty upon every believing man and woman, and no one will turn away from it except those who are stubborn and hostile; because the words of the Ahl al-Bayt of the Messenger of God (s) are connected to the divine word. An example of this is God's statement in the Quran where He says: 'Indeed those who offend Allah and His Apostle are cursed by Allah in the world and the Hereafter, and He has prepared a humiliating punishment for them' (Q 33:57). We find the like of this verse in the words of the Messenger of God (s) where he says: 'Whoever harms ʿAlī [(a)] has indeed harmed me, and whoever harms me has harmed God, and whoever harms God, it is near that He will take revenge on him.' Likewise, there is another saying of the Prophet (s) where he said: 'Whoever loves ʿAlī [(a)] has loved me, and whoever loves me has loved God'..."[1]

1. Ibn Shuʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 458-59.

Imam al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (a)

"Those who have the most knowledge of the rights of their [religious] brothers are those who strive more to fulfill their needs, and the most honorable of them in the sight of God is the one who humbles himself before them in the world. [By doing this] he will be among the truthful in the sight of God and will be counted among the true followers of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a). Two people from among the believers, who were father and son, entered upon the Commander of the Faithful (a). The Imam (a) [out of respect for them] got up, honored them, seated them at the head of the gathering, and sat facing them. Then he ordered food to be prepared and fed them. [After the meal,] Qanbar [the servant of the Imam (a)], holding a wooden ewer, along with a basin and a towel for drying hands, [entered and] wanted to pour water on the hands of the man. The Commander of the Faithful (a) got up from his place and took the ewer himself and wanted to do this, but the man threw himself on the ground and said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, should God see me while you are pouring water on my hands?!' The Imam (a) said, 'Sit down and wash your hands, for God sees you while your brother, who has no advantage over you [in appearance] and is not superior to you, serves you, and in return for this act [from God], he asks for ten times the number of people in the world as servants in Paradise, for the calculation in the divine kingdom is like this.' So the man calmed down, and ʿAlī (a) said to him, 'I beseech you by the abundance of your right over you, which you recognize and have magnified, and also by your humility before God, which caused you to be honored so that I may serve you, wash your hands as if Qanbar is pouring water on your hands [and do not rush in your task out of respect for me].' When the man finished, he called his son Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya and said, 'My son, if the son of this man had entered upon me alone and without his father, I would have poured water on his hands myself, but God dislikes that when a father and son are gathered in a place, they should be treated equally. The father poured water on the hands of the father, and now, the son should pour water on the hands of the son.' Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya did this." Imam al-ʿAskarī (a) then said, "So, whoever follows ʿAlī (a) in this matter [i.e., humility before the believing brothers] is truly a Shia."[1]

1. Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 2: 460-61.

Description of Ali (a) in the words of his companions

1. Salmān al-Fārsī said: I continue to love ʿAlī (a), [because] I saw the Messenger of God (s) striking his [ʿAlī's] foot and saying: "Your friend is my friend, and my friend is the friend of God. Your enemy is my enemy, and my enemy is the enemy of God Almighty."[1]

2. When Muʿāwiya asked ʿAdī[2] about his affection for ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), He replied: "By God, my love for him [ʿAlī (a)] is profound and only continues to grow. Were it not for my love for him, I would have no desire for Paradise, and I will attain it only through my love for him. Did not the Messenger of God (a) make him a signpost during the Farewell Pilgrimage? Did he not proclaim on the day of Ghadīr Khumm: 'Whoever considers me his master, ʿAlī is also his master. O God, be the master of those who take him as their master, forsake those who forsake him, and support those who support him'? Did you not hear the voice of the Messenger of God (a) on that day, as he stood atop the saddle of his camel, speaking about him? We heard it just as you did, and we saw it just as you did. Therefore, this serves as proof for you and all who witnessed that day with their eyes and heard the words of Muḥammad (a) with their ears."[3]

3. It has been narrated from Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣūḥān and other companions of Imam ʿAlī (a) about him: "[Imam (a)] was among us like one of us: humble, extremely modest, and his leadership was easy and unpretentious. [Despite this] we were so captivated by his awe-inspiring presence."[4]

4. [When Muʿāwiya asked al-Aḥnaf b. Qays about the Commander of the Faithful (a), he said:] "He was always in three states and always abandoned three things: When he spoke, [it was as if] he held the hearts of the listeners in his hand; when he was spoken to, he would listen carefully; he did not mind others disagreeing with his opinion and view. He always disliked arguments and disputes and avoided them; he did not associate with lowly and wicked people; he never ordered anything for which there was an excuse not to do."[5]

5. [When Muʿāwiya asked Ḍirār b. Ḍamura al-Nahshalī[6] to describe ʿAlī (a), he said:]

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1. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 133.

2. ʿAdī b. Ḥātim al-Ṭāʾī is considered one of the companions of the Messenger of God (s). He was the chief of the Ṭayyiʾ tribe after his father, Ḥātim al-Ṭāʾī, and was in the ranks of Imam ʿAlī's (a) companions in the battles of Jamal, Ṣiffīn, and Nahrawān. He died in Kufa in the year 67/687 (see Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 3: 1058-59).

3. Ḍubbī, *Akhbār al-wāfidīn*, 23-24.

4. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 25.

5. Warrām, *Tanbīh al-khawāṭir*, 2: 14.

6. Ḍirār b. Ḍamura has been referred to as al-Nahshalī, al-Kattānī, and al-Ḍabābī in various sources. He is considered one of the true companions of Imam ʿAlī (a), and the date of his death is unknown (see Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 24: 401-2; Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-rijāl*, 5: 539-40).

"By God, he was among us like one of us. When we went to him, he would bring us close, neither was the door of his house closed to us, nor was there a doorkeeper between him and us. Although he would bring us close to himself, we would never speak to him [directly] because of his awe, and because of his greatness, we would never initiate conversation in his presence. When he smiled, [the whiteness of his teeth] appeared [beautiful] like arranged pearls ... May God have mercy on ʿAlī [(a)]. By God, he was very awake [at night in worship] and slept little, he would recite the Quran every hour of the night and day, and he was generous in offering his life to God. No curtain was drawn for him, and he did not conceal the wealth [of the treasury] from anyone, he did not like to lean back [out of arrogance], and he did not treat the wrongdoers harshly. When you saw him in his prayer niche, while the curtain of night had fallen and the stars of the sky had risen, [you would see him] holding his beard in his hands, writhing like one bitten by a snake [out of fear of God], and saying with tears like a grief-stricken person: 'O world, are you showing off to me or are you making me desire you? Never, never do I have any need for you [that] I have divorced you three times, for which there is no return. So, alas and [a hundred] alas for the distance of the path, the scarcity of provisions, and the hardship of the journey'..."[1]

6. [It has been narrated that Imam ʿAlī (a)] called one of his servants several times, but he did not answer His Eminence (a). When [Imam (a) left the house], he found the servant at the door and asked him: "What prevented you from answering me?" [The servant] replied: "I was lazy to answer, [because] I was safe from your punishment." [The Imam (a)] said: "Praise be to God who has placed me among those from whom His creatures are safe. [Then he said to the servant:] Go, for I have freed you in the way of God."[2]

7. It has been narrated from Abū l-Ṭufail: "I saw ʿAlī calling the orphans and giving them honey [with kindness]. [His affection and compassion were such] that some of his companions would say: 'I wish I were an orphan too.'"[3]

8. [ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, in response to Muʿāwiya who had asked him about the Commander of the Faithful (a), said:]

"By God, he was [always] engaged in reciting the Quran, an enemy of evil, far from falsehood, forbidding what is wrong, and never tainted by indecency. He was knowledgeable in his religion and always in awe of God, far from sin, spending the night

1. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 624-25; see also Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 421-22.
2. Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 113.
3. Ibid., 2: 76.

in worship and the days in fasting. He was sound from [the contamination of] the world and committed to justice towards people, enjoining good and warning against [sin which deserves] destruction. His face was illuminated with divine light, and he had control over his desires. He surpassed all people in piety, contentment, and chastity, and was superior and a leader to them in asceticism, trustworthiness, goodness, and vigilance. By God, he was [always] committed to Islam, a refuge for orphans, a pillar of faith, at the peak of goodness, a shelter for the weak, and a haven for the righteous. He was a strong fortress for the truth and a firm support for the people. He upheld the right of God so patiently and in pursuit of reward that the religion of God became honored everywhere, and God was worshipped in all lands, in the corners of cities, and in plains and deserts. He was blessed in prosperity and grateful in [times of] hardship. By God, he worshipped a lot in the early mornings, he wept a lot in remembrance of the fire of Hell, he was engaged in contemplation in all hours of the day and night, he was at the forefront of generosity and giving, striving in everything that caused salvation [from divine wrath] and far from anything that caused falling into the pit of sin. By God, he was a sign of guidance, a mine of piety, a place of reason and wisdom, a sea of generosity, [like] a mountain in [the firmness of] opinion and wisdom, a source of knowledge for mankind, and [like] a [guiding] light for traveling in [the plains of] darkness. By God, he was a caller to the straight and direct path, always clinging to the firm handhold [of faith], knowledgeable in what is in the heavenly books, and wise in obedience to the great Lord. He knew the interpretation [of the divine verses] and what was revealed in the Quran and was far from deviant paths. He excelled in greatness and glory, was diligent in religion and piety, and was far from injustice and wickedness. [He] was the best and leader of all after the chosen Prophet (s) who prayed towards two qiblas, the most compassionate, truthful, generous, and superior among all believers and worshippers. The most eloquent among orators and the most fluent among the fluent. Does anyone have the ability to rival him, while he is the husband of the best of women [i.e., Lady Fāṭima (a)]? Does anyone have the ability to equal him, while he is the father of the two grandsons [al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (a)]? Does any creature reach him? By God, [like a lion in the battlefield] he was ferocious, shining in battles, and firm as a mountain in the tremors [of weak faith]."[1]

9. When a group of Imam ʿAlī's (a) companions in Ṣiffīn saw how Muʿāwiya treated his supporters and [how much] wealth he bestowed upon those who joined him while people were pursuing worldly gains, they said to Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a): "Distribute the

1. Ṭabarī al-Āmulī al-Kabīr, *al-Mustarshid*, 306-7.

wealth [of the treasury] among the people and give a larger share to the nobles and those whom you fear their opposition or their defection [to Muʿāwiya]. Once the situation is in your favor, return to the just method, which is better, and divide the wealth equally among the people." [The Imam (a)] said: "Do you want me to achieve victory over the Muslims, over whom I have been granted authority, through injustice [towards others]? By God, as long as the storytelling of storytellers continues and as long as the stars revolve in the sky, I will [never] do this. If the wealth [of the treasury] of the Muslims belonged to me [and I was its owner], I would divide it equally among them, let alone the fact that the wealth [of the treasury] belongs to them [and they are its owners]?"

[Imam ʿAlī (a)] remained silent for a while and then said: "Whoever has wealth, let it not be [a cause for] corruption. Indeed, when you give wealth in a place it does not belong, you have spent excessively and extravagantly. This act raises the name of the owner of the wealth among the people and lowers him before God. Let no one place his wealth in a place that is not its right and spend it for those who are not worthy of it, or he will be deprived of their gratitude and its good will benefit others. If any of the unworthy remain with him and express love and gratitude towards him, it is undoubtedly out of flattery and falsehood. This is because they have only remained close to him to benefit from him, just as they did before. [In this case], when the owner of the wealth faces a problem and needs help and reward for his [seemingly] good deeds [that he has done for others], [the one who has remained with him out of greed for his wealth] will be the worst friend and the most harmful companion for him. It is the proverb of the ignorant, as long as they benefit from his blessings, while he is stingy towards his God. What gain is more insignificant and lowlier than such a gain, and what favor is more wasted and useless than such a favor? Therefore, whoever [God] has given wealth to, let him maintain kinship ties with it, hold a good feast with it, free the helpless and captive with it, and help the debtors, the stranded, the poor, and the emigrants with it. Let him encourage himself to [earn] rewards and [fulfill divine] rights with patience, for through these qualities, he will attain honor in this world and virtue in the Hereafter."[1]

10. ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib said to ʿAlī (a), "O Commander of the Faithful, I wish you would grant me some financial aid or a stipend [from the public treasury], for by God, I have nothing [of wealth] except to sell some of my livestock." [The Imam (a)] said to him, "By God, you have no right [to the public treasury], unless you want your uncle to steal and [give you some of the stolen wealth]."[2]

1. Ibn Shuʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 185-86.
2. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 43.

11. ʿAlī (a) spoke with Mālik al-Ashtar about people joining Muʿāwiya, and Mālik said, "O Commander of the Faithful, we fought alongside the people of Basra and Kufa, against the Basrans [i.e., the supporters of the Camel (*Jamal*)], while everyone's opinion was united, but after that, discord arose among them, enmity began, intentions weakened, and numbers decreased. This is because you hold them accountable with justice and treat them with [the bitterness of] truth, you equate the lowly with the noble, and the noble has no better position with you compared to the lowly. Thus, a group of those who are with you have become weary of the truth, and since justice has encompassed all of them, they have become saddened. [This] is while [in contrast, the generosity and] actions of Muʿāwiya are [all] for the wealthy and the nobles. The hearts of people are ensnared by the world, and few among them are not attached to the world, and most of them do not like the truth and consider falsehood good, and they prioritize the world. O Commander of the Faithful, if you bestow wealth upon them, all will turn to you, they will be your well-wishers, and their love for you will become pure. O Commander of the Faithful, may God grant you goodness, humiliate your enemy, scatter their gathering, weaken their plot, and disperse their affairs, '... Indeed, He is well aware of what they do' (Q 11:111)." After praising and thanking God Almighty, ʿAlī (a) responded to him:

"As for what you said about the actions and approach that we have taken based on justice, God says about this, 'Whoever acts righteously, it is for [the benefit of] his own soul, and whoever does evil, it is to its detriment, and your Lord is not tyrannical to His servants' (Q 41:46)," and I fear more that I may be deficient in what you said [about my just behavior, rather than having exceeded in it]. But your words about them abandoning us because the truth became difficult for them, then truly God knows that they did not abandon us because they were called to justice or because of any oppression [that may have been inflicted by us, but] they were only after a world so fleeting as if they had abandoned it. Indeed, on the Day of Resurrection, they will be asked whether they were after the world or acted for the sake of their Lord? But regarding what you said about giving wealth and drawing people closer through it, truly we do not have the ability to give anyone more than their right from the public treasury, because God, who is always associated with truth, said, 'How many a small party has overcome a larger party by Allah's will! And Allah is with the patient' (Q 2:249). God sent Muḥammad (s) and increased [his companions] after they were few, He gave their group honor after humiliation [in the mortal world]. So, if God wills, we will undertake this matter, He will make hardship easy for us and make the rough path smooth. I accept your opinion in

what pleases God [and will implement it], because you are among the most trustworthy, reliable, well-wishing, and wise of my companions."[1]

12. When ʿAqīl requested [a stipend] from the public treasury,[2] the Commander of the Faithful (a) told him, "Be with me on Friday." So ʿAqīl did just that. When the Imam (a) finished the Friday prayer, he asked ʿAqīl, "What do you say about someone who betrays all these [worshipers]?" [ʿAqīl] said, "He is the worst of people." The Imam (a) said, "[Despite this,] you want me to betray them and give [from the public treasury] to you?"[3]

13. It has been narrated from Ibn Yamān: [One day] I entered the mosque and saw five people cursing and insulting ʿAlī [(a)], and one of them, who was wearing a cloak (*burnus*), said, "I have made a covenant with God that I will strike him [i.e., ʿAlī (a)] with a sword, a blow that will kill him." [When I heard this,] I firmly grabbed the speaker [so he wouldn't escape]. People gathered, and some of them said, "You have put yourself through trouble, let him go," others said, "You are a stranger [to be doing such a thing]." But I said, "Woe to you, I heard something from him and I will not let him go until I take him to the Commander of the Faithful." So I took his hand and dragged him until we reached the Imam (a) and recounted the story to him. [The Imam (a)] said, "Woe to you, who are you?" I said, "I am Misāwir al-Minqarī." ʿAlī [(a)] said, "Let him go." I said, "By God, I will not do that." He said, "Let him go." I said, "Should I let him go, while he has made a covenant with God to kill you?" The Imam (a) said, "Woe to you, how can I kill him when he has not yet killed me?" I said, "He cursed [and insulted] you." He said, "If you wish, curse him, or let him go."[4]

14. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya narrated: When they were busy performing the rites of washing and shrouding Imam ʿAlī (a), those present noticed his knees and the tops of his feet were calloused from the abundance of prostrations. They also noticed his shoulders were calloused, similar to the places of his prostration. They asked Muḥammad [b. al-Ḥanafiyya], "We understand the calluses on the places of prostration are from the abundance of prayer and the long prostrations [of the Imam (a)], but what is the reason for the calluses we see on his shoulders?" [Muḥammad] said, "If [my father] were alive, I would never have spoken about it. Not a day passed for him except that he would feed the poor, one or more, to the extent of his ability. When night came, he would put whatever was left of his family's food in a bag, and when people went to sleep, he would

1. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 46-8.
2. See Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 2: 379; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 4: 92.
3. Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 109.
4. Kūfī, *Manāqib*, 2: 360.

carry it on his shoulders. He would go through the alleys of the city to the doors of people who, despite their poverty, would not ask for anything from others out of modesty. The Imam (a) would distribute whatever was in the bag among them, without them knowing who he was or anyone from his family knowing he was doing this except me. I became aware of this without him knowing, as he was hoping to attain the virtue of hidden charity given by one's own hand by concealing this act, and he would say: 'Giving charity secretly extinguishes the fire of God's wrath."[1]

15. One of the residents of Basra narrated: [I spent some time in Kufa without having a place to stay] and I used to sleep in the mosque ... One day, I left [the mosque] for the market when [suddenly] I heard a voice saying to me, "O man, tie your lower garment higher, for it is better for its cleanliness and more appropriate in [observing] Godwariness." I asked, "Who is he?" They said, "He is the Commander of the Faithful, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib." So I followed him. He turned his way towards the camel market, and when he reached there, he stood in the middle of the market and [in a loud voice] said, "O group of merchants, do not swear falsely, for this act destroys wealth and erases blessings." Then he went to the linen market, and when he came across a well-dressed man, he said, "Will you sell two shirts for five dirhams?" The man immediately replied, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful." [The Imam (a)], realizing that the seller had recognized him, left him and went to another seller who was young and said, "O young man, will you sell two shirts for five dirhams?" He replied, "Yes. I have two shirts, one of which is better than the other. I sell one for three and the other for two dirhams." He said, "I will buy it," [then] he said, "O Qanbar, take the one that costs three dirhams for yourself." Qanbar said, "You are more deserving of it, O Commander of the Faithful, as you ascend the pulpit and deliver sermons to the people." He said, "O Qanbar, you are young and have youthful desires, and I am ashamed before my Lord to have superiority over you [in clothing], for I heard from the Messenger of God (a) who said: 'Clothe [your servants] from what you wear yourselves, and feed them from the food you eat yourselves.'" Then [the Imam (a)] put on the shirt, and when he saw that its sleeves were longer than his fingers, he said, "O young man, cut off the excess." The seller cut it off. The young seller said, "O old man, it would be better if I sew [the edges of the cut]," He said, "Leave it, for indeed, death will come much faster than that."[2]

16. Zādhān al-Kindī narrated: "I saw ʿAlī (a) would go to the market, guide the lost, and help the porter in carrying the load, [doing these things] while reciting this verse:

1. Ibn Ḥayyūn, *Daʿāʾim al-Islām*, 1: 241.
2. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 65-66.

'This is the abode of the Hereafter, which We shall grant to those who do not desire to domineer in the earth nor to cause corruption, and the outcome will be in favour of the Godwary' (Q 28:83). Then he would say: This verse was revealed about the rulers and those in authority among the people."[1]

17. It has been narrated: ʿAlī (a) [on the battlefield of Ṣiffīn] went out while only holding a walking stick in his hand and passed by Saʿīd b. Qays al-Hamdānī. Saʿīd said to the Imam (a), "O Commander of the Faithful, are you not afraid that someone might [unexpectedly] kill you, while you are close to the [ranks of the] enemy?" He said, "There is no one except that guardians from God have been appointed for him, who protect him from falling into a well, or a wall falling on him, or any harm reaching him. When the divine decree [for that person's death or harm to reach him] arrives, they will leave him alone."[2]

18. Al-Ḥārith al-Hamdānī narrated: I spent a night with the Commander of the Faithful (a) and said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, I have a need." He said, "Do you consider me worthy of asking for it?" I said, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful." He said, "May God reward you with goodness [for your good opinion of me]." Then he got up and extinguished the lamp and said, "I only extinguished the lamp so that I would not see the [embarrassment and] dejection of asking for a need on your face, for I heard from the Messenger of God (s) who said: 'Needs are a trust from God in the hearts of the servants. Whoever conceals it, the reward of worship will be written for him, and whoever reveals it, it is obligatory upon the one who hears it [the need] to help [its owner].'"[3]

19. Al-Aswad and ʿAlqama [from the companions of Imam ʿAlī (a)] said: One day we entered upon the Commander of the Faithful (a) and [saw] in front of him a container made of palm leaves on which there were one or two barley bread loaves, while [due to the low price of flour] the barley husks were visible in the appearance of the bread. The Imam (a) would break the bread loaf on his knee and eat it with salt. We said to his black maidservant, whose name was Fiḍḍa, "Wouldn't it have been better if you had sifted the flour for the Commander of the Faithful [and separated the husks from the flour to produce better bread]?" ... The Imam (a) smiled and said, "I told her not to sift it." We said, "Why, O Commander of the Faithful?" He said, "This act is better for humbling the

1. Ibn Biṭriq, *ʿUmdatu ʿuyūn*, 308.
2. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 250.
3. Ḥur al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil*, 9: 457.

[desires of the] soul, so that the believers may follow my [example] and I may be equal to my companions [and other people] [in the type and quality of food]."[1]

20. It has been narrated that [Imam ʿAlī (a)], when the time for prayer arrived, the color of his face would change and his limbs would tremble, and when he was asked, "What has happened to you?", he would say, "The time has come for the trust that 'We offered to the heavens and earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it' (Q 33:72), while I am weak and do not know whether I can bear what has been placed upon my shoulders or not?"[2]

21. [It has been narrated:] "When [ʿAlī (a)] would engage in prayer, [due to the long duration of his prayer and his humility] he would resemble a firm building or a solid pillar that has no movement ... No one can perform prayer like the Messenger of God (s) except ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and Imam al-Sajjād (a)."[3]

22. Sulaymān b. Mughīra narrated from his mother: I asked Umm Saʿīd, the maidservant of ʿAlī [(a)], about ʿAlī's prayer during the month of Ramadan. She said, "[For him, the months of] Ramadan and Shawwāl were the same, and [he would spend both months in worship and] night vigil."[4]

23. Nawf al-Bakālī narrated: I stayed at the house of the Commander of the Faithful (a) one night. [The Imam (a)] prayed all night, and every hour he would go out, look at the sky, and recite the Quran. When a good portion of the night had passed, he passed by me and said, "O Nawf, are you asleep or awake?" I said, "I am awake and watching you, O Commander of the Faithful." He said, "O Nawf, blessed are those who are ascetic in the world and have set their hearts on the Hereafter ..."[5]

24. Muʿāwiya said to Khālid b. al-Muʿammar,[6] "Why do you love ʿAlī [(a)]?" He said, "Because of [the existence of] three qualities [in him]: his forbearance during anger and rage, his truthfulness when speaking, and his justice when he takes control of the government."[7]

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1. Warrām, *Takbīh al-khawāṭir*, 1: 48.
2. Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 124.
3. Ibn Ḥayyūn, *Daʿāʾim al-Islām*, 1: 159.
4. Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 123.
5. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 1: 337.
6. Khālid b. al-Muʿammar al-Sadūsī as considered one of the companions of the Messenger of God (s) and during the reign of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 13-23/634-44) he was the chief of the Bakr b. Wāʾil tribe. He was with the Commander of the Faithful (a) in the battles of Jamal and Ṣiffīn and was killed during the conquests of Armenia in the reign of Muʿāwiya (see ʿAsqslānī, *al-Iṣāba*, 2: 299).
7. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 594.

25. Muʿāwiya asked ʿAdī about his sons, Ṭarīf and Ṭarafa. ʿAdī replied, "They were killed fighting alongside ʿAlī (a)." Muʿāwiya remarked, "'Alī did not treat you fairly—he had your sons killed while keeping his own children alive." ʿAdī responded, "It was I who did not treat ʿAlī fairly, for he was killed while I am still alive." He then declared that the hatred for Muʿāwiya still burned in his heart and those of his companions and that they were always ready to fight him. Referring to the insults directed at ʿAlī (a) from the pulpits, ʿAdī said, "Indeed, having our throats cut and our chests trampled is easier for us than hearing insults against ʿAlī (a)."[1]

26. Muʿāwiya, during one of the years of his rule, performed the Hajj and summoned a woman from among the followers of the Commander of the Faithful (a) named Al-Dārmiyya al-Ḥujūniyya and said to her, "Why did you accept his guardianship [i.e., ʿAlī's guardianship] and consider me an enemy?" She said, "Indeed, I love ʿAlī (a) because of his justice in treating the subjects and the fair distribution of the treasury among the people, and I dissociate myself from you for fighting one who was more entitled to rule than you, and for your pursuit of what was not yours. I accepted the guardianship of ʿAlī (a) because the Prophet (s) appointed him to guardianship, [because] he loved the poor and honored the Muslims, and I consider you an enemy because of the excessive bloodshed and the destruction of the unity [of the Muslims]."[2]

27. Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī was walking in the streets of the Helpers' residence in Medina [and in a loud voice] was saying, "'Alī [(a)] is the best of people, and whoever refuses [to accept that] has indeed become a disbeliever. O group of Helpers, raise your children on the love of ʿAlī [(a)]."[3]

28. It has been narrated from Usayd b. Ṣafwān, the companion of the Messenger of God (s): On the day of the demise of the Commander of the Faithful (a), the whole city wept, and the people were distraught and bewildered like the day of the Prophet's (s) passing. A weeping man, hastily and hurriedly, while constantly saying, 'Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return,' and crying out in a loud voice, 'Today the successorship of prophethood has been severed,' arrived at the door of the house where the Commander of the Faithful (a) had passed away. That man said:

"O Abū l-Ḥasan, may God have mercy on you, for you were the first of this nation to join Islam, the purest in faith, the firmest in certainty, the most God-fearing, the most enduring of hardship, the most protective and trustworthy of the Messenger of God (s)

1. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 3: 4-5.
2. Ibn Ṭayfūr, *Balāghāt al-Nisāʾ*, 76.
3. Ṣadūq, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, 3: 493.

among all his companions, superior in merits, nobler in background, higher in rank, closer to the Messenger of God (s), and more similar to the Prophet (s) in guidance, character, behavior, and actions. May God reward you on behalf of Islam, the Muslims, and His Prophet (s), for you were strong when his companions were weak, and when they remained in their places [out of fear], you stepped into the battlefield, and when they showed humiliation, you rose, and when they weakened, you remained steadfast on the path and tradition of the Messenger of God (s), and when his companions began to [disagree], you were his rightful and undisputed successor. You did not show weakness in the face of the humiliation of the hypocrites, the anger of the disbelievers, the resentment of the envious, and the abasement and insignificance of the corrupt. When they failed in the matter [of the caliphate], you took it upon yourself, and when they were unable to speak, you initiated speech, and when they hesitated [in various matters], you guided them with the light of God, so they followed you and were guided. You, your speech was the softest, the most obedient to God, the least talkative, the most truthful, your opinion the most correct, your heart the bravest, the firmest in certainty, your actions the best, and the most knowledgeable in affairs. By God, you were the leader of the religion in the beginning and the end, in the beginning [i.e., after the passing of the Prophet (s)], when everyone dispersed, and in the end [i.e., after the killing of ʿUthmān], when their work ended in failure. When [you took the reins and] the people became your dependents and under your care, you were a compassionate father to the believers, bearing the burden of what they were unable to bear, preserving what they ruined, considering what they neglected, and when they agreed [on one opinion], you made efforts, and when they became greedy [for worldly desires], you ascended [and did not taint yourself with it], and when they rushed [in matters], you remained patient. You avenged every revenge they wanted [for the blood shed by the polytheists], and through you, they obtained what they did not even imagine [of good and blessings]. You were a descending and destroying punishment for the disbelievers, and for the believers, [like] a supporter and a [strong] fortress. By God, you enjoyed the blessings of the world and were triumphant over its gifts, you attained its comfort and earned its virtues, [but despite this,] your eloquence and sharpness of argument and proof did not diminish, your heart did not deviate [from the path of God], your insight did not weaken, and your soul did not become lethargic or fall [into the trap of desire]. You were like a mountain, steadfast against strong winds, as the Prophet (s) said: 'The most trustworthy of people in companionship and trustworthiness,' and as he said: '[People found you] weak in body [while] you are strong in the matter of God.' [Among them] you were humble, and in the

presence of God, you were majestic and magnificent, and on earth and among the believers, you were noble and honorable. No one could find fault with you, and no speaker could criticize you. No one expected you to [compromise the truth], and you did not show leniency or softness towards anyone [in the matter of religion and truth]. The weak and powerless were strong and mighty in your presence until you restored their rights, and the strong and powerful were weak and lowly in your presence until you retrieved the truth from them. In this state, the near and far [and stranger and acquaintance] were the same to you, and your character and approach were [based on] truth, honesty, and tolerance. Your speech was wisdom and steadfastness, and your command was restraint and firmness in actions, and your thought and opinion were knowledge and determination towards everything you did. Indeed, [through you] the right path became clear, the difficult path became easy, and the fires [of discord] were extinguished. The religion became straight with you [after the deviations], and Islam became strong with you, and the command of God became manifest, although the disbelievers did not like it. Islam and the Muslims became steadfast through you, and you surpassed everyone so much that you caused hardship for those who come after you. You are too great for your sorrow to be cured by wailing and crying. The tragedy of your death weighed heavily on the sky and crushed the people. 'Indeed we belong to Allah and to Him do we indeed return' (Q 2:156), we are pleased with the divine decree and submit to His command. By God, [your tragedy is so heavy and grave] that the Muslims after you will never face a tragedy like yours. Because you were a shelter and refuge for them, and like a steadfast and firm mountain, and for the disbelievers, you were wrath and harshness. May God reunite you [on the Day of Judgment] with His Prophet (s), and may He not deprive us of the reward and not lead us astray after you."

The people remained silent until the end of his words, while he was speaking with tears, and along with him, the companions of the Messenger of God (s) were also shedding tears. After that, no matter how hard they tried to find him, no one ever saw him again.[1]

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 454-56.

Imam ʿAlī's Imamate: Arguments and Textual Evidence

Introduction

The question of the Imamate and Caliphate was one of the earliest points of contention within the Muslim community. There is ample historical evidence indicating that the issue of succession was a significant concern for the Prophet (s) and other Muslims from the outset. According to Islamic reports and hadiths, the Prophet (s) explicitly or implicitly designated ʿAlī (a) as his successor on various occasions and emphasized this choice. The culmination of these events was the incident of Ghadīr Khumm, which took place during the Prophet's final Hajj pilgrimage in the last year of his life. In this event, the Prophet (s) raised ʿAlī's hand and declared to the gathered crowd: "Whoever takes me their *mawlā* (guardian or master), then ʿAlī (a) is also their *mawlā*."

After the Prophet's passing in 11/633, a group of Muslims gathered at the Saqīfa of Banū Sāʿida and selected Abū Bakr as the successor to the Prophet (s). At that time, ʿAlī (a), along with the Banū Hāshim and many other Muslims, was engaged in attending to the Prophet's burial rites. Although this selection faced objections from Imam ʿAlī (a), the Banū Hāshim, and several notable companions of the Prophet (s), it did not lead to the annulment of the decision made at Saqīfa. Moreover, the use of incentives and intimidation by Abū Bakr's supporters played a significant role in consolidating his

position as the Prophet's successor,[1] marking the primary point of divergence between the Shiite and the Sunni communities.

In this study, we aim to first elucidate the definitions of Imamate, its necessity, the qualifications for an Imam, and the methods of determining leadership in the perspectives of the Sunni and Imami traditions. We will then present the most significant arguments and textual evidence for the Imamate of Imam ʿAlī (a). The discussion of the evidence for the leadership of Imam ʿAlī (a) is divided into two main categories: Quranic evidence and historical-hadith evidence. An effort has been made to derive, classify, and present these arguments and texts from primary Sunni exegetical, hadith, and historical sources.

Imamate: Definition, Necessity, Qualifications, and Methods of Determining the Imam

Imamate is a central concept in Islamic thought. The political dimension of Islam, exemplified by the establishment of the Prophetic government under the leadership of the Prophet (s) in Medina, along with the theological and political disputes that arose over the issue of Imamate following the Prophet's demise—disputes that led to the emergence of various intellectual and theological currents among Muslims—have further underscored the significance of this topic. As such, the question of Imamate has consistently attracted the attention of Muslims. Al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) identified the issue of Imamate as one of the earliest points of contention among Muslims, describing it as the greatest source of division among them.[2] This section explores the definition, necessity, qualifications, and methods of determining the Imam within Islamic thought. These issues will be examined through a dual categorization and in terms of the intellectual foundations of the Sunni and Shiite traditions.

1. Some historical sources document instances of coercion and incentives being employed to secure allegiance (*bayʿa*) to Abū Bakr as Caliph. For example, reports indicate that ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, Abū ʿUbayda al-Jarrāḥ, and others would encounter individuals in the streets of Medina and compel them through force to pledge allegiance (Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 219). Another report provides an example of attempts to incentivize allegiance: representatives of Abū Bakr approached ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet's uncle, offering promises of including him and his descendants in governance if he refrained from supporting ʿAlī (a) and instead supported Abū Bakr (Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 124-26). For a detailed discussion of such actions, see the biographical section of the present book.

2. Shahristānī, *al-Milal wa al-niḥal*, 1: 31.

Definition of Imamate

Lexical sources offer various definitions and interpretations for the term "Imām." Some describe an Imam as a person who is followed or emulated.[1] Others define an Imam as someone whose words and actions are adhered to.[2] Additionally, some equate the concept of Imam with that of caliph (*al-khalīfa*), referring to the successor of the Prophet (s) holding a political office.[3]

In Sunni thought, Imamate refers specifically to the "Grand Imamate" (*al-imāma al-ʿuẓmā*),[4] emphasizing aspects such as succession to the Prophet (s), safeguarding religion, and managing worldly affairs. Al-Māwirdī (d. 450/1058) defines Imamate as follows: "[This term] is coined to denote succession to the Prophet (s) in safeguarding religion and administering worldly matters."[5] Similarly, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) describes the essence of Imamate as follows: "in truth, [Imamate is] the deputization of the Lawgiver [the Prophet (s)] in protecting religion and organizing worldly affairs in accordance with it."[6] Throughout different eras, the Imam in Sunni thought has been referred to by various titles, including caliph (*al-khalīfa*), Commander (*al-Amīr*), Sultan (*al-Sulṭān*), and other similar designations.[7]

In Shīʿī thought, Imamate is defined as "the general leadership in religious and worldly matters on behalf of the Prophet (s)."[8] Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991) explains the reason for the designation of an Imam as "Imam" in this way: "The Imam is called such because he is appointed by God as a leader, and his obedience is obligatory upon the servants [of God]."[9] Imami theologians across various eras have adopted these definitions and expanded upon them.[10] A key element in the definition of Imamate within both Shiite and Sunni perspectives is its connection to the Prophet's legitimacy and governance, as well as Imam's role as a deputy to the Prophet (s).

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1. Farāhīdī, *K. al-ʿAyn*, 8: 428; Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbbād, *al-Muḥīṭ*, 10: 460.
2. Rāghib, *Mufradāt*, 87.
3. Fayyūmī, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-munīr*, 2: 23.
4. Āl Saʿūd, *Mawsūʿat al-ʿaqīda*, 1: 360.
5. Māwirdī, *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya*, 15.
6. Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh*, 1: 238.
7. Ibid., 2: 329; Qalqashandī, *Maʾāthir al-ināqa*, 1: 20-28.
8. Mufīd, al-Nukat al-iʿtiqādiyya, 39.
9. Ṣadūq, *Maʿānī l-akhbār*, 64-65.
10. See Mīlānī, *Mawsūʿat al-turāth al-Imāmī*, 3: 229-38.

The Place of Imamate

Based on what is presented in Sunni theological sources, it can be said that, in this tradition, the concept of Imamate is defined within its political and governmental context. The emphasis on one of the primary duties of the Imam being the administration of the affairs of Muslims, which is achievable through governance, underscores the political nature of the office of the Imamate in their thought. Additionally, due to the political nature of the matter of the Imamate, obedience to the ruler under any circumstances, even if he is unjust or sinful, is also justified. From this perspective, Imamate is considered a secondary issue in Sunni theology, distinct from foundational theological principles such as monotheism (*al-tawḥīd*) and Prophethood.[1]

The Shiites, however, have introduced the issue of the Imamate as one of their most important matters. Therefore, the Imamate in Shiite thought is considered one of the principles of the faith and is placed alongside other principles such as monotheism and Prophethood. Imamate is regarded as one of the principles that has led to the distinction of the Shiites from other Islamic sects, and anyone who does not believe in this principle will be excluded from the circle of Shiism. According to Shiite belief, this position is designated by God, and due to their belief in the Imamate of the Twelve Imams, they are known as the "Imamis" (*al-Imāmiyya*).[2]

ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1235) regarded Imamate as one of the most critical aspects of religion and among the most honorable issues for Muslims. He considered Imamate a cornerstone of faith, through which one could attain the highest degrees of divine grace, enter Paradise through belief in it, and be spared from God's wrath.[3] The numerous works authored by Shiite clergies and scholars of hadith across different periods further reflect the elevated status of Imamate in Shiite thought.[4] Shiite theologians, citing verse 67 of Surah al-Māʾida (5), have equated the proclamation of Imamate with the proclamation of the entire religion, taking this to signify its centrality in Islam.[5] Additionally, drawing on verse 7 of Surah al-Raʿd (13)—which states that every community must have a guide—they emphasize the guiding role inherent to the position of the Imam.[6]

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1. See Ansari, Nanji and Pakatchī, "Imāmat," 137-38, 146-47.
2. Kāshif al-Ghiṭāʾ, *Aṣl al-Shīʿa*, 68.
3. Ḥillī, Mihāj al-karāma, 27.
4. In *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, one can find numerous scholars mentioned who authored works titled "*Kitāb al-Imāma*" or "*Kitāb al-Waṣiyya*."
5. See e.g., Ṭabrisī, *Tafsīr Jawāmiʿ*, 1: 342; Tustarī, *Iḥqāq al-ḥaq*, 2: 494.
6. Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Imāma*, 132; Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān*, 6: 222-23.

Considering these points, it can be asserted that the position of Imamate in Shiite thought represents one of the most significant doctrinal issues, attaining a lofty status alongside beliefs such as monotheism and Prophethood. The emphasis on the guiding role and scholarly authority of the Imam in Shiite thought has been greater than its political dimension, which is manifested in the administration of Muslim affairs.[1]

Necessity of Imamate

Considering the definition of "Imam" and "Imamate" in Sunni thought, it becomes clear that this position is primarily defined within a political framework. One of the central pillars of Imamate in Sunni thought is the management of worldly affairs, which is closely tied to the issue of governance. As previously noted, Sunnis have described the Imam with various titles, further reinforcing the political nature of the definition of Imamate within their perspective. For instance, some Sunni scholars interpret the term *ūlū al-amr* (those vested with authority), mentioned in verse 59 of Surah al-Nisāʾ (4), as referring to rulers and leaders.[2]

Given the political nature of the issue of Imamate in Sunni thought, its necessity is also defined within this framework. Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī (d. 926/1520) articulated the necessity of having an Imam as follows: "It is indispensable to have an Imam who supports the [Prophetic] Tradition, restores the rights of the oppressed, enforces [divine] rights, and places each [of those rights] in its proper context."[3] However, various opinions exist as to whether the obligation to establish an Imam in Sunni thought stems from rational necessity or religious injunction. Some hold that the necessity of Imamate is rational, while others base it on transmitted textual evidence (*naql*).[4] In general, the Muʿtazilites grounded the necessity of Imamate in reason, while other Sunni schools considered its basis to be transmitted textual evidence and religious law. A third group combined both rational and religious justifications for the necessity of Imamate. In contrast to other Islamic sects, the Kharijites outright rejected the necessity of Imamate.[5] Overall, it can be said that the explanation for the necessity of Imamate in Sunni thought places greater emphasis on consensus (*ijmāʿ*) and transmitted textual evidence from the Quran and Sunna.[6]

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1. Ansari, Nanji and Pakatchī, "Imāmat," 137-38.
2. Nawawī, *al-Minhāj*, 12: 223.
3. Anṣārī, *Asnā al-maṭālib*, 4: 108.
4. Māwirdī, *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya*, 15-16.
5. See Sanhūrī, *Fiqh al-Khilāfa*, 81-84.
6. See Āl Saʿūd, *Mawsūʿat al-ʿaqīda*, 1: 361-62.

Some Shiite theologians, emphasizing the rational basis for the necessity of Imamate, have presented the "Argument from Grace" (*burhān al-luṭf*). In his formulation of this argument, Ibn Maytham al-Baḥrānī (d. 679/1280) states that the appointment of an infallible Imam is an act of grace (*luṭf*)—a means that brings duty-bound individuals (*mukallafūn*) closer to obedience to God and distances them from sins. Furthermore, it is a form of grace that only God can actualize; failing to do so would contradict His purpose.[1] Another group of Imami theologians has offered a composite argument to explain the necessity of Imamate. They argue that reason unequivocally dictates that the Prophet (s), after enduring years of hardship to propagate Islam, must have planned for his succession to ensure the religion's preservation, continuity, and growth. It is inconceivable, they contend, that the Prophet (s) would neglect to establish a system for safeguarding the faith and fail to appoint a custodian and guardian for it. Thus, common sense asserts that the Prophet (s) would have designated a successor to protect the eternal divine law he conveyed. It is therefore rationally obligatory for the Prophet (s) to have appointed a successor for himself. The logical conclusion of this reasoning is that the Prophet (s), by divine command, must have explicitly declared his successor to the people. This declaration, according to Shiite belief, occurred during various significant events, where the Prophet (s) introduced his designated successor to the community.[2]

In presenting transmitted textual evidence for the necessity of Imamate, there are shared points between what Sunni and Imami scholars and theologians have articulated. One such shared argument is the one based on verse 59 of Surah al-Nisāʾ (4), commonly referred to as the verse of "*ūlū al-amr*" (those vested with authority). This verse underscores obedience to God, the Prophet (s), and *ūlū al-amr*: "O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you." Theologians from both sects have regarded this verse as evidence for the necessity of having an Imam in every era. Another shared argument based on transmitted evidence for the necessity of Imamate is a Prophetic hadith stating: "Whoever dies without recognizing the Imam of his time dies as one who died during the age of ignorance (*jāhiliyya*) [before the advent of Islam, dying as a non-Muslim]." This hadith has also been cited by some theologians from both sects as evidence for the necessity of Imamate.[3]

1. Ibn Maytham, *Qawāʿid al-marām*, 175-76.

2. See Subḥānī, *Manshūr-i ʿaqāʾid-i Imāmiyya*, 151-60.

3. See e.g., Ṭūsī, *Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣal*, 407; Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾida l-Nasafiyya*, 96-97; Āl Saʾūd, *Mawsūʿat al-ʿaqīda*, 1: 361.

Qualifications of the Imam

In Sunni theological sources, certain general qualifications and attributes are specified for the Imam. In addition to physical fitness, which enables the ruler to manage affairs effectively, other required qualities include being from the Quraysh tribe, being male, free (not enslaved), rational, and of mature age. Moreover, according to some Sunni theologians, the Imam must possess certain acquired attributes, such as knowledge and the capacity for ijtihad (the ability to make deductions) in religious rulings, as well as God-wariness and piety.[1]

Imami theologians regard the superiority (*afḍaliyya*) of the Imam over other people and excellence in attributes such as knowledge and courage as essential qualities and conditions of Imamate.[2] Similarly, some Muʿtazilites, Zaydis, and Murjiʾites share this belief with the Imamis.[3] Another attribute considered necessary for the Imam in Imami thought is *ʿiṣma* (infallibility). This means that the Imam must be free from committing any sins and must never err or forget in matters of religion.[4] The belief in the infallibility of the Imam is therefore one of the distinguishing features of Shiite thought on the doctrine of Imamate.

Methods of Determining the Imam

There is a disagreement among Sunni theologians regarding the methods of determining the Imam. Some Sunni scholars have proposed only two methods: election by the people and appointment by the previous Imam.[5] According to some reports, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), a prominent Sunni scholar, considered the existence of an explicit designation from the Prophet (s) as one way of determining the Imam.[6] An important point regarding the methods of determining the Imam from the perspective of Sunni theologians is that these methods are based on historical precedents in the caliphate and Imamate, as reflected in some sources. For instance, Ibn Ḥanbal viewed an explicit designation by the Prophet (s) as one way to determine the Imam because he believed in the existence of an implicit designation from the Prophet (s) indicating Abū Bakr as

1. Imām al-Ḥaramayn, *al-Ghiyāthī*, 76-89; see also Āl Saʾūd, *Mawsūʿat al-ʿaqīda*, 1: 362-64.

2. Mufīd, *al-Masāʾil al-Jārūdiyya*, 45; see also Mīlānī, *Mawsūʿat al-turāth al-Imāmī*, 1: 393-417.

3. See Mufīd, *Awāʾil al-maqālāt*, 39-40.

4. Ibid., 39, 65.

5. Māwidrī, *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya*, 21-22; Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *Ikmāl al-muʿlim*, 6: 220. There is, however, a difference of opinion among Sunni theologians regarding the number of people required to elect an Imam and the qualifications they must possess (see Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal*, 3: 95-100).

6. Qāḍī Abū Yaʿlā, *al-Muʿtamad*, 223. However, the author considers the attribution of this belief to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal incorrect, rejecting this view altogether.

his successor.[1] Similarly, Ibn Qudāma (d. 620/1223) outlined three methods for determining the Imam: election by the leaders of the community, appointment by the previous Imam, and seizure of power through force. He cited historical examples as evidence for this method: the appointment of Abū Bakr through the election of the Prophet's companions, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's appointment by Abū Bakr, and the military victory of ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān over ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr to establish his rule.[2]

Imami theologians have identified the sole method of determinikng the Imam as divine scriptural evidence or an explicit indication made by divine command. They have also refuted the validity of other proposed methods for determining the Imam.[3] Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, in his argument for the necessity of scriptural evidence for and explicit designation of the Imam, bases his reasoning on the conditions and qualities required of an Imam. He asserts that, since the Imam must be the most virtuous, the most knowledgeable, the most courageous, and the most righteous individual in the eyes of God—qualities that cannot be discerned through reason or conjecture—it is necessary, according to the principle of divine grace (*al-luṭf*), for the Imam to be designated either directly by God or through someone truthful in conveying God's command.[4]

Arguments and Textual Evidence for Imam ʿAlī's Imamate

By examining Shiite hadith literature, it becomes evident that the majority of hadiths containing arguments for the Imamate of Imam ʿAlī (a) were issued during the period of Imam al-Bāqir (a) and Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) (94–148/713–65). These hadiths showcase the Shiite Imams' reliance on Quranic verses and their interpretation, as well as arguments based on Prophetic hadiths and historical reports.[5] Among the points highlighted in these hadiths are the divine verses that refer to the succession and Imamate of Imam ʿAlī (a), the transfer of knowledge and the inheritance of Prophethood from the Prophet (s) to Imam ʿAlī (a) by divine command, and references to the tradition of succession among divine Prophets. Broadly speaking, Quranic verses and Prophetic hadiths serve as the two foundational pillars supporting the Imamate of Imam ʿAlī (a), as argued by the Imams.

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1. See Ibid. Some sources attribute the belief regarding the Prophet's indication of Abū Bakr's succession to the Murji'a and Hashwiyya, two Islamic sects (Ḥimyarī, *al-Ḥūr al-ʿīn*, 154).

2. Ibn Qudāma, *al-Mughnī*, 12: 243; see also Āl Saʿūd, *Mawsūʿat al-ʿaqīda*, 1: 364-65.

3. See Mīlānī, *Mawsūʿat al-turāth al-Imāmī*, 16: 3-36. Among the Islamic sects, the Zaydis hold the belief that the Prophet (a) had issued a hidden divine indication regarding the Imamate of Imam ʿAli (a) (Āmidī, *Abkār al-afkār*, 5: 140).

4. See Mufīd, *al-Masāʾil al-ʿUkbariyya*, 52; Mufīd, *al-Masāʾil al-Jārūdiyya*, 44-46.

5. See e.g., Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 292-97.

Imami theologians, in addition to the rational arguments for the necessity of the Imamate and explicit religious texts for the Imamate of the Imams, have followed an approach similar to that of the Imams (a) themselves in arguing for the Imamate of Imam ʿAlī (a). Since the presence of textual evidence in Shiite theological thought is regarded as the sole method for determining the Imam, and all Imami scholars unanimously agree on this principle,[1] Prophetic hadiths hold a particularly significant place in these arguments. Another notable aspect of theological arguments for the Imamate of Imam ʿAlī (a) is the special attention given to the Prophet's conduct (*sīra*) and the role of Imam ʿAlī (a) during the Prophetic mission.

Since this literature emerged within a polemical context between Shiites and Sunnis on the issue of the Imamate, Imami scholars in their arguments have primarily relied on hadiths found in Sunni sources that are agreed upon as authentic. The same approach has been observed in interpreting the Quranic verses that indicate the Imamate of Imam ʿAlī (a). In this section, this principle has been emphasized, and accordingly, the Quranic, historical, and hadith-based evidence presented here is largely drawn from texts found in Sunni sources and narrated or recorded by their prominent scholars.

Quranic Arguments

The issue of succession to the Prophet (s) arose naturally in society during the Prophetic era. This was likely because the people of that time were aware, as some Quranic verses attest,[2] that the Prophet (s), like them, was a human being with a finite lifespan and would eventually depart this earthly world. The Quran itself underscores this point, warning people against reverting to pre-Islamic ignorance in the event of the Prophet's passing: "Muḥammad is but an apostle; [other] apostles have passed before him. If he dies or is slain, will you turn back on your heels?" (Q 3:144). Moreover, the Quran addresses the concepts of "Imamate" and "Caliphate." The term "al-Imāma" (Imamate) is mentioned 11 times,[3] and "al-khilāfa" (caliphate) occurs 9 times.[4]

The abundance of stories about previous Prophets in the Quran, along with numerous Quranic references and citations from earlier scriptures, particularly the Torah and the Gospel, attest that the people of the Prophetic era were familiar with the content of these scriptures. The Bible addresses the issue of the succession of Prophets, mentioning the

1. Mufīd, *Awā'il al-maqālāt*, 40-41.

2. In verses 110 of Surah al-Kahf (18) and 6 of Surah Fuṣṣilat (41), God commands the Prophet (s) to declare to the people that he is a human being like them, except that he receives revelation from God.

3. Zayn, *al-Mu'jam al-mifahras*, 1: 148; see also ʿAba al-Bāqī, *al-Mu'jam al-mufahras*, 80-81.

4. Zayn, *al-Mu'jam al-mifahras*, 1: 161; see also ʿAba al-Bāqī, *al-Mu'jam al-mufahras*, 240.

successors of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.[1] Similarly, in Quranic narratives about divine Prophets, their successors are appointed by God and invariably come from the families of those Prophets.[2] Considering these points, it appears natural that the Prophet's succession was addressed in the Quran.

Given the central role of the Quran in Islamic thought and its universal acceptance among all Islamic sects and schools, Imami theologians have consistently emphasized Quranic evidence in their arguments for the Imamate of Imam ʿAlī (a). According to hadiths, ʿAlī (a) holds a unique position in the Quran, as no other Muslim has had as many verses revealed about them as ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a).[3] Some companions of the Prophet (s) have estimated that 300 verses were revealed concerning him.[4] For instance, al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) cites 84 verses or sets of verses in *Nahj al-ḥaqq wa kashf al-ṣidq* as evidence for the superiority and caliphate of Imam ʿAlī (a).[5] Here, we will highlight the most significant verses indicating the guardianship (*al-wilāya*) and Imamate of Imam ʿAlī (a).

In a general directive, the Quran commands people to obey God, the Prophet (s), and those vested with authority, stating: "O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you" (Q 4:59). Imami theologians, drawing on the content of this verse, have regarded it as evidence for the obligation to recognize the Imams (a), since by making obedience to them mandatory, God has made their recognition obligatory as well.[6]

In the Quranic arguments for the caliphate of Imam ʿAlī (a), certain verses from Surah al-Mā'ida (5) hold the most explicit references to his authority. The significance of Surah al-Mā'ida lies in the fact that it is the last surah revealed to the Prophet (s), and its revelation occurred all at once.[7] Some reports suggest that it was revealed after the Farewell Pilgrimage, midway between Mecca and Medina.[8]

One of the verses from this surah that has been cited for Imam ʿAlī's Imamate is verse 55, which states: "Your guardian (*waliyyukum*) is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful

1. See Ṭāhirī, "Barrasī-yi taṭbīqī-yi jānishīn-ī wa waṣāyat dar Qur'ān wa 'Ahdayn," 12-25.
2. See Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad*, 3-16.
3. Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-khulafā'*, 205.
4. Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 364.
5. Ḥillī, *Nahj al-ḥaq*, 172-212.
6. See e.g., Mufīd, *al-Ifṣāḥ*, 28.
7. See e.g., Qāsim b. Sallām, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, 239; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 42: 53; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, 5: 111; Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 10: 79.
8. Qāsim b. Sallām, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, 239; Mustaghfirī, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, 2: 536; Suyūṭī, *al-Dur al-manthūr*, 2: 252.

who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down." It was previously mentioned that God has deemed obedience to the guardians of authority as obligatory, just like obedience to Himself and His Apostle. This verse specifies the instance of the "guardian" (*al-walī*) by presenting a characteristic. Many Sunni exegetical sources have interpreted the revelation of this verse as pertaining to ʿAlī (a). Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405/1015) narrates the occasion of this verse's revelation as follows: When the verse was revealed, the Prophet (s) entered the mosque while the people were engaged in prayer. A beggar was seeking help from the congregation, and the Prophet (s) asked him, "Did anyone assist you?" The man pointed to ʿAlī (a) and replied, "No one helped me except the one who was bowing down; he gave me his ring."[1]

Another hadith, narrated by ʿAmmār b. Yāsir (d. 37/657), states: "While ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) was bowing during prayer, a beggar approached him. He removed his ring and gave it to the beggar while still in that position. He then went to the Prophet (s), recounted what had happened, and this verse was revealed to the Prophet (s): "Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down." The Prophet (s) recited the verse and declared: 'Whoever I am his guardian, ʿAlī (a) is also his guardian. O God, be a supporter of those who support him and an enemy to those who take him as their enemy'".[2] Sunni exegetical sources have also identified ʿAlī (a) as the referent of this verse,[3] and some historical sources have mentioned this incident.[4]

Two other verses from this surah pertain to the event of Ghadīr Khumm and the declaration of ʿAlī's succession. Verse 67, known as "the verse of proclamation" (*al-tablīgh*), states: "O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord, and if you do not, you will not have communicated His message, and Allah shall protect you from the people. Indeed Allah does not guide the faithless lot." Al-Ḥākim al-Ḥasakānī (d. 490/1097), citing Ziyād b. al-Mundhir (d. after 150/767), narrates the occasion of this verse's revelation as follows:

> I was in the presence of Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAlī (a) [Imam al-Bāqir (a)], and he was speaking to the people. A man from Basra named ʿUthmān al-Aʿshā, who

1. Ḥākim, *Maʿrifat ʿulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 102.

2. Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-awsaṭ*, 6: 218.

3. See e.g., Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, 1: 485-86; Ibn Abī Ḥhtim, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm*, 4: 1162; Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 6: 186.

4. See Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 150; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 357; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 7: 357. Ibn Sharāshūb (d. 588/1192) has briefly mentioned the narrators and Sunni sources who attest to the revelation of this verse in honor of ʿAlī (a) (Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 3: 2-3).

narrated from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, stood up and said: "O son of the Messenger of God, may I be sacrificed for you! Ḥasan [al-Baṣrī] has informed us that this verse was revealed about a specific person, but he does not name him. [The verse is:] 'O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord.'" [Imam al-Bāqir (a)] replied: "If he wanted, he could have named that person, but he fears and hesitates to do so. Indeed, Gabriel descended to the Prophet (s) and told him: 'God has commanded you to guide your community to prayer.' So [the Prophet (s)] guided the people to prayer. Then, Gabriel descended again and said: 'God has commanded you to instruct your community on zakāt.' So he instructed them on zakāt. … Then Gabriel descended and said: 'God has commanded you to guide your community to their guardian [and introduce him to them].' … The Messenger of God (a) said: 'My Lord, the people are still steeped in the spirit of ignorance, and among them, rivalry and arrogance prevail. None of them is free of grievances against their guardian [ʿAlī (a)], whom they resent for what he has done to them [due to their disbelief]. I am concerned about this matter.' Therefore, God revealed [this verse]: 'O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord, and if you do not, you will not have communicated His message, and Allah shall protect you from the people.' By this, He meant that if the matter is not fully proclaimed or communicated, the message will not be delivered. When God warned him and assured him [of His protection from the people], the Prophet (s) raised the hand of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) and declared: 'O people, whoever I am his guardian, ʿAlī (a) is also his guardian. O Lord, support whoever supports him, and be an enemy to whoever takes him as enemy. Help those who help him and forsake those who forsake him. Love those who love him and despise those who despise him.'"[1]

Another hadith transmitted by ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd (d. 32/650) states: "During the time of the Messenger of God, [we recited this verse as follows]: 'O Apostle! Proclaim what has been sent down to you from your Lord—verily, ʿAlī (a) is the guardian of the believers—and if you do not, you will not have delivered His message. And Allah shall protect you from [any harms by] the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the faithless lot'".[2] Other exegetical sources also include reports affirming that verse 67 of Surah al-Mā'ida was revealed concerning ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) and before the event of Ghadīr Khumm.[3]

1. Ḥasakānī, *Shawāhid al-tanzīl*, 1: 253-55.

2. Ibn Mardawayh, *Manāqib ʿAlī*, 239-40; Suyūṭī, *al-Dur al-manthūr*, 2: 298.

3. See Ibn Abī Ḥhtim, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm*, 4: 1172; Ibn Mardawayh, *Manāqib ʿAlī*, 239-41; Thaʿlabī, *al-Kashf wa l-bayān*, 4: 92; Wāḥidī, *Asbāb nuzūl al-Qurʾān*, 204.

Another verse cited in support of the event of Ghadīr and considered indicative of the significance of Imamate is verse 3 of Surah al-Māʾida, famously known as the "Verse of Completion" (*al-ikmāl*). Part of the verse states: "Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam as your religion." Regarding the occasion of this verse's revelation, it is narrated from Abū Hurayra (d. 59/678) that he, highlighting the merit of fasting on the 18th of Dhū al-Ḥijja, the day of Ghadīr Khumm, said: "When the Messenger of God (a) declared the successorship of ʿAlī (a), ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb said to ʿAlī (a): 'Congratulations, congratulations, O son of Abū Ṭālib (a)! You have become the guardian (*mawlā*) of me and of every Muslim.'" Subsequently, this verse was revealed.[1] In another account of this event, Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (d. 74/693) narrated that after the verse was revealed, the Prophet (s) said: "Praise be to Allah for perfecting the religion, completing the blessing, approving my apostleship, and ʿAlī's guardianship."[2] Historical sources have also mentioned this event.[3]

Another type of Quranic argument for the guardianship of Imam ʿAlī (a) appears in the verses indicating his infallibility and purity. Since these verses establish ʿAlī's immunity from falsehood, they affirm the truthfulness of his claim to caliphate. An example is verse 33 of Surah al-Aḥzāb (33), known as the "Verse of Purification" (*al-taṭhīr*), which addresses the Prophet's Household, stating: "Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification." In his argument based on this verse, al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī asserts that since ʿAlī (a) is among those addressed by the verse and is thereby proven free from all impurity and sin, he is truthful in his claim to immediate succession of the Prophet (s).[4] Many early Sunni hadith sources also affirm that the verse was revealed regarding the Prophet's Household, explicitly including ʿAlī (a) among them.[5]

Historical and Hadith-Based Arguments

It was previously mentioned that the society of the Prophet's era, both naturally and through Quranic emphasis, was aware that the Prophet (s) had a finite lifespan and would eventually pass away. Moreover, considering what the people of that time knew

1. Daqqāq, *Fawā'id*, 217; Ḥasakānī, *Shawāhid al-tanzīl*, 1: 200.
2. Ibn Mardawayh, *Manāqib ʿAlī*, 232.
3. See Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 43, 112; Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 8: 284-85; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 233-34, 237.
4. Ḥillī, *Nahj al-ḥaq*, 173-74.
5. See e.g., Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, 5: 204, 205, 6: 132; Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 410.

about the lives of divine Prophets from divine scriptures such as the Torah and the Gospel, along with the stories of the Prophets mentioned in the Quran—particularly those referring to their successors—they were familiar with and attentive to the issue of the Prophet's succession. They knew that one of the divine traditions is that every Prophet (s) must have a trustee and successor after him.

The Prophet (s) paid attention to the issue of succession and caliphate from the very beginning of his divine mission, referring to it on various occasions. In the earliest stage of his public call, known as *Yawm al-Indhār* (the Day of Warning), the Prophet (s) focused on inviting his close relatives. Following the divine command to begin his call with those nearest to him— "Warn the nearest of your kinsfolk" (Q 26:214)—he invited them to his home and prepared a meal for them.[1]

The Prophet (s) then called those present to embrace monotheism and asked them to declare their readiness to support him in spreading the message of Islam. In return for this support, he declared that the one who accepted would become his brother, successor (*waṣī*), and leader after him. The Prophet (s) repeated his request several times, and each time ʿAlī (a) declared his readiness to assist him. Finally, the Prophet (s) pointed to ʿAlī (a) and addressed those present, saying: "Indeed, this is my successor among you. Listen to him and obey him." The attendees, laughing, turned to Abū Ṭālib (a) and said, "He [the Messenger of God (s)] has instructed you to obey your own son and follow his leadership."[2] The final part of this account indicates that those present at the gathering understood the Prophet's words to imply the very concept of succession and leadership that the Shiites later articulated.

In another event, when the Prophet (s) traveled around Mecca to invite the nearby tribes to Islam and seek a place to establish an Islamic government, he approached the Banū ʿĀmir tribe for this purpose. Their leader agreed to accept the Prophet (s) on the condition that leadership succession would remain among them. In response, the Prophet (s) said: "[The decision regarding] this matter belongs to God. He will grant it to whomever He wills."[3] This report, while reflecting the preoccupation with the issue of succession in the Hijazi society of that time, also highlights the Prophet's declaration of the divine nature of the caliphate. Another report alluding to this point is narrated by ʿUbāda b. al-Ṣāmit (d. 34/655), one of those present at the second pledge of ʿAqaba. ʿUbāda recounted the pledge made by the people of Yathrib to the Prophet (s), stating:

1. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 118.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 321.
3. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 424-25.

"We pledged allegiance to the Messenger of God to listen [to his words] and obey [him] ... [and also] not to dispute over the matter [of leadership and caliphate] ..."[1]

Another indication of the community's attention to the matter of the Prophet's succession is a question posed by Salmān al-Fārisī, encouraged by several companions, regarding the Prophet's successor. The Prophet (s), referring to the role of Joshua (Yūshaʿ b. Nūn) as the successor of Prophet (s) Moses, identified ʿAlī (a) as the one who would inherit from him, fulfill his obligations, and realize his promises.[2] The connection between this report and the issue of succession becomes evident when considering Joshua's role among the Children of Israel (Israelites) after Moses's death. According to historical sources, Joshua succeeded Moses and assumed their leadership.[3]

Since explicit designation (*al-naṣṣ*) is one of the fundamental conditions for Imamate according to Imami Shiism, Imami theologians have consistently sought to identify various examples of Prophetic words and the Prophet's explicit designation of ʿAlī (a) as his successor within the corpus of Islamic hadith and historical literature. Consequently, numerous Prophetic hadiths and historical reports affirming Imam ʿAlī's appointment to succession and leadership by the Prophet (s) can be found throughout the theological works of Imami scholars. Most of these reports are cited from Sunni sources.[4] Here, we will review the hadiths and accounts found in primary Sunni sources that indicate Imam ʿAlī's succession to the Prophet (s), arranged chronologically and thematically.

1. Hadith of the Day of Warning (*Yawm al-Indhār*)

As previously mentioned, the Prophet (s), in the very first step of his public call, raised the issue of succession, appointing ʿAlī (a) in this capacity and instructing everyone to obey him. It was also noted that, based on the reaction of those present and their remarks to Abū Ṭālib (a), they understood the Prophet's words to mean ʿAlī's succession and the obligation to obey him.[5] This hadith has also been narrated in Sunni hadith sources. In some versions of this hadith, the Prophet (s) explicitly identified ʿAlī (a) as his successor among his family.[6] This hadith is narrated by Abū Bakr as well.[7]

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1. Mālik b. Anas, *Muwaṭṭaʾ*, 2: 445.
2. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 615; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 6: 221; Hauthamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawāʾid*, 9: 113.
3. See e.g., Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 12.
4. See Mīlānī, *Mawsūʿat al-Imāma*, 5: 376-431.
5. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 321.
6. See e.g., Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 2: 650, 700; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-awsaṭ*, 4: 296-97; Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawāʾid*, 9: 113.
7. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 50.

2. Hadith of the Position (*al-Manzila*)

One of the virtues of Imam ʿAlī (a), repeatedly cited in Sunni hadith sources with various chains of transmission, is the hadith known as "the Hadith of the Position" (*al-Manzila*). The most well-known report regarding its temporal context is during the Prophet's departure for the Battle of Tabuk in 9/630. When the Prophet (s) prepared to leave for Tabuk, he appointed ʿAlī (a) as his deputy in Medina. At this time, some of his companions made disparaging remarks, suggesting that the Prophet (s) had left ʿAlī (a) behind because he did not wish for his company.[1] Imam ʿAlī (a) approached the Prophet (s) and recounted these comments. The Prophet (s) responded, "You are to me as Aaron was to Moses, except that there is no Prophet (s) after me." This statement, with slight variations in wording, is recorded in numerous Sunni hadith sources.[2]

According to reports in the hadith sources of both Sunni and Shiite traditions, the Hadith of the Position was not limited to the incident of Tabuk. It was also mentioned on several other occasions, including the event of *Yawm al-Indhār* (the Day of Warning), the establishment of the brotherhood pact, the incident of *Sadd al-Abwāb* (closing of the doors), the conquest of Khaybar, the appointment of a guardian for the daughter of Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib in 7/629, and in praise of ʿAlī (a) addressed to Umm Salama.[3] A hadith transmitted from from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) states that the Prophet (s) repeated these words addressed to ʿAlī (a) on ten occasions.[4] In some versions of the hadith, the Prophet (s) explicitly added, "You are my successor among all believers after me."[5]

The significance of the Hadith of Position regarding the Prophet's succession and Imam ʿAlī's right to the caliphate becomes even more apparent when we examine the role of Aaron in relation to Moses as described in the Quran. The Quran portrays Aaron's position as parallel to that of Moses, with the two often mentioned together.[6] In several verses, Aaron is described as a manifestation of divine mercy granted to Moses. For instance, the Quran states: "And We gave him out of Our mercy his brother Aaron, a Prophet (s)" (Q 19:53). Another verse declares: "Certainly We gave Moses the Book and We made Aaron, his brother, accompany him as a minister" (Q 25:35). Additionally, the Quran recounts Moses instructing Aaron: "And Moses said to Aaron, his brother, 'Be my

1. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 2: 519.
2. See e.g., Maʿmar b. Rāshid, *Jāmiʿ*, 11: 226; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5: 19, 9: 3; Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4: 1870, 1871; Ibn Maja, *Sunan*, 1: 83; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, 6: 83, 88, 89.
3. See Rayshahrī, *Mawsūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib* (a), 2: 152-62.
4. Qundūzī, *Tanābīʿ al-mawadda*, 2: 302-3.
5. See e.g., Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Sunna*, 2: 565, 603; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 417.
6. See e.g., Q 4: 163; 6: 84; 7: 122; 10: 75; 20: 70; 21: 48; 23: 45; 26: 48; 37: 114, 120.

successor among my people, and set things right …'" (Q 7:142). Considering the position of Aaron relative to Moses in the Quran, and in light of the Hadith of Position, it is evident that ʿAlī (a) served as both the Prophet's minister and his successor in delivering the divine message and rulings. Moreover, ʿAlī (a) was a manifestation of God's mercy upon His Messenger.

3. Hadith of Ghadīr

On the 18th of Dhū al-Ḥijja in the year 10/19 March 632, at a location known as al-Juḥfa, while the caravan of pilgrims was returning from the Prophet's final pilgrimage, Gabriel descended with the following verse: "O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord, and if you do not, you will not have communicated His message, and Allah shall protect you from the people. Indeed Allah does not guide the faithless lot" (Q 5:67).[1] Following this event, the incident famously known as Ghadīr Khumm occurred. This event is one of the most significant pieces of evidence cited by Shiites in support of Imam ʿAlī's right to leadership and succession. Over the centuries, this event has been the subject of numerous works authored by Muslim scholars and thinkers.[2]

After receiving the revelation, the Prophet (s) instructed the caravan of pilgrims to halt so that those behind could catch up and those ahead could return. Following the midday prayer, the Prophet (s) ascended a pulpit formed from camel saddles and delivered a sermon. In parts of his sermon, the Prophet (s) affirmed that he had conveyed all that was revealed by God and that he had spoken truthfully. Referring to the two weighty things (*al-thaqalayn*) he was leaving among the people, he explained: "One is the Book of God. One end of it is in the hand of God, and the other end is in your hands. Hold fast to it, so you do not go astray. The other is my family, my progeny and household. God has informed me that these two will never separate until they join me at the Pond of *Kawthar*. Do not precede them, for you will perish, and do not fall behind them, for you will be led astray. Observe carefully how you behave toward them after me." The Prophet (s) then took ʿAlī's hand, raised it so all those present could see, and, referring to his own authority over the people and obtaining their acknowledgment, declared: "Whoever I am his guardian (*mawlā*), ʿAlī (a) is also his guardian." He repeated this

1. The occasion of the revelation of this verse during the return journey of the Muslims from the *Ḥijjat al-Widāʿ* (Farewell Pilgrimage) is mentioned in these sources: ʿAyyāshī, *al-Tafsīr*, 1: 331-32; Ḥasakānī, *Shawāhid al-tanzīl*, 1: 254-55; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 237; Suyūṭī, *al-Dur al-manthūr*, 2: 298.

2. Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Ghadīr fī l-turāth al-Islāmī*, 17. The late ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1996) introduces 146 works on this subject in this book, spanning the period from the second/9th century to his own time.

statement three times, adding: "O God! Be a friend to those who take him as their friend and an enemy to those who oppose him. Support those who support him, and abandon those who forsake him. Turn truth to follow him wherever he turns." At the conclusion of his remarks, the Prophet (s) instructed: "Let those who are present convey this message to those who are absent."[1]

One of the most significant statements in the Prophet's sermon at Ghadīr is the phrase: "Whoever considers me his mawlā, then ʿAlī (a) is also his mawlā." This phrase, which serves as the primary evidence for Shiites regarding Imam ʿAlī's appointment as the Prophet's successor, can be examined from two perspectives: its chain of transmission (*sanad*) and its textual content. From the perspective of its chain of transmission, if this hadith is narrated by numerous transmitters, includes diverse chains of transmission in various hadith sources—particularly Sunni collections—and is deemed sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) or frequently transmitted (*mutawātir*) by specialists in hadith studies, this attests to the certainty of the event's occurrence and the issuance of the statement by the Prophet (s). From this perspective, the analysis focuses on the specific phrase in question, as narrators naturally tend to emphasize the most critical parts of events, rather than recounting all details. The Hadith of Ghadīr is no exception to this tendency.

Regarding textual content, the central discussion regarding the hadith of Ghadīr revolves around the meaning of the word "mawlā" and its implication for guardianship, leadership, and succession. In what follows, we examine how lexicological sources define this term and what meaning the people of that era—the direct audience of the sermon—derived from it.

The Chain of Transmission of the Hadith of Ghadīr: Considering the large number of narrators among the Prophet's companions (*ṣaḥāba*), companions of companions (*tābiʿūn*), and Sunni scholars, it can be argued that the Hadith of Ghadīr is one of the rare hadiths in Islamic tradition that has achieved such a significant level of multiplicity in its chains of transmission. Among the narrators of this hadith, more than 110 companions, 84 companions of companions, and 360 Sunni scholars can be identified.[2] A review of

1. For the text of al-Ghadīr sermon, see Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 108-12; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 112; Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 247; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 12: 234; Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 3: 29; Suyūṭī, *al-Dur al-manthūr*, 2: 298; Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 37: 124, 184-85; Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 1: 34-35.

2. ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī (d. 1970), in his work *al-Ghadīr*, provides a list of the companions, companions of companions, and Sunni scholars who have narrated the Hadith of Ghadīr. While presenting these lists, he notes that the actual number of individuals exceeds what he has documented, as many sources were unavailable to him or were lost over various periods (see Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 1: 41-311). Additionally, al-Sayyid Hāshim al-Mīlānī, based

primary historical and hadith sources from the first three Islamic centuries (7th–10th centuries CE) also provides a comprehensive list of companions who transmitted this hadith. The names of these individuals are as follows:

Ḥabashī b. Junāda (d. ?),[1] Ḥudhayfa b. Usayd (d. 42/662),[2] Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī (d. 50/670),[3] Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ (d. 55/674),[4] Abū Hurayra,[5] Burayda b. Ḥuṣayb (d. 63/682),[6] Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī,[7] Zayd b. Arqam (d. 66 or 68/685–87),[8] ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās (d. 68/678),[9] ʿAdī b. Ḥātim (d. 68/678),[10] Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī (d. after 70/689),[11] al-Barrāʾ b. ʿĀzib (d. 73/692),[12] and ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar (d. 73 or 74/692–93).[13]

Another noteworthy aspect of the Hadith of Ghadīr is its frequent transmission (*tawātur*)[14] in hadith sources. Although, given the large number of Companions and Successors who narrated the Hadith of Ghadīr, there is no need to establish its frequent transmission, an examination of what Sunni scholars have stated regarding frequently transmitted hadiths reveals their acknowledgment of the frequent transmission of the Hadith of Ghadīr. Their statements on this matter can serve as evidence. For example, it is reported that al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347), one of the greatest Sunni hadith scholars, affirmed the frequent transmission of the Hadith of Ghadīr.[15] He is said to have compiled

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on what is found in the hadith collections of both Sunni and Shiite traditions, compiled a list of 124 members of the Prophet's Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*) and companions who have narrated the Hadith of Ghadīr (Mīlānī, *Ḥadīth al-Ghadīr*, 9-89).

1. Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Sunna*, 309.
2. Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, 6: 74.
3. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 366.
4. Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1: 88.
5. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 108.
6. Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 308. It is worth noting that in some sources, as will be mentioned later, Burayda narrated this hadith in the context of the expedition to Yemen.
7. Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 4: 193.
8. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 32: 29, 73-74, 75-76.
9. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 682.
10. Ḍubbī, Akhbār al-wāfidīn, 23.
11. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 366.
12. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 30: 430-31.
13. Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Sunna*, 2: 604.
14. A "mutawātir" hadith is one whose chains of transmission are numerous and meet four conditions: (1) A sufficient number of narrators must have transmitted the hadith, such that it is improbable for them to have conspired to fabricate it; (2) its chain of transmission must be continuous from beginning to end, with each narrator transmitting it from the preceding one; (3) the narrators must have heard the hadith directly with their own ears; (4) their statements must be certainty-conferring for the listener. A "mutawātir" hadith yields definitive knowledge, meaning it provides certainty of its issuance (ʿAsqalānī, *Nuzhat al-naẓar*, 196-97.).
15. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 5: 214.

a book collecting the chains of transmission of the phrase "*man kuntu mawlāhu*" narrated by 30 companions of the Prophet (s).[1] Before him, Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī had authored a work gathering the chains of transmission of the Hadith of Ghadīr, which al-Dhahabī had examined and reported on.[2] In addition to these two, several other Sunni scholars have acknowledged the frequent transmission of the Hadith of Ghadīr.[3]

Another aspect of the chain of transmission of the Hadith of Ghadīr is its authenticity and the reliability of its narrators. While the inclusion of this hadith in the six canonical Sunni collections, such as *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan Ibn Māja*, and *Sunan al-Nasāʾī*, itself supports its authenticity,[4] several Sunni hadith scholars have also explicitly affirmed its validity. Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321/933), after narrating the Hadith of Ghadīr through various chains, wrote regarding its chain of transmission: "This hadith has a sound chain of transmission, and none of its narrators have been dismissed as unreliable."[5] Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405/1015), in narrating the hadith through multiple chains, declared four of its chains of transmission as authentic.[6] Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr (d. 463/1071), in his bibliographical account of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) and his virtues as mentioned in the Prophetic hadiths, regarded all of these hadiths, including the Hadith of Ghadīr, as "established" (*āthār thābita*).[7] Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī (d. 654/1256) narrated the hadith through several chains and deemed most of them authentic.[8] Al-Taftāzānī (d. 793/1390), after narrating the hadith, wrote: "This hadith is one whose authenticity is universally agreed upon. ʿAlī (a) reiterated it during the day of the council while enumerating his virtues, and none of those present denied it."[9] Al-Haythamī (d. 807/1405) narrated the hadith through 31 chains, 13 of which he classified as authentic.[10] Al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449), referencing its inclusion by al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892) and al-Nasāʾī (d. 303/915), and noting that Ibn ʿUqda (d. 332/944) had authored a work on its chains of transmission, affirmed

1. Maqrīzī, *al-Muqaffā*, 5: 125. This book was edited and published by the late ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī under the title *Risāla ṭuruq ḥadīth man kuntu mawlāhu fa-ʿAlīyun mawlāhu* (An essay concerning the chains of transmission of the hadith "Whoever I am his guardian, ʿAlī is also his guardian").
2. Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām*, 14: 277.
3. See Riḍwānī, *Ghadīrshināsī*, 102-3.
4. See Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, 6: 74; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1: 87-88; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 437.
5. Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ mushkil al-āthār*, 5: 19.
6. Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 118, 119, 143, 613.
7. See Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 3: 1097-1100.
8. Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat al-khawāṣ*, 38.
9. Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 2: 290.
10. See Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawāʾid*, 9: 103-9.

the authenticity of many of its chains.[1] Al-Qasṭallānī (d. 923/1517) also, in terms similar to those of al-ʿAsqalānī, emphasized the authenticity of the hadith.[2] Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 974/1657), known for his anti-Shiite stance, nonetheless acknowledged the authenticity of this hadith, noting that it had been narrated by more than 30 companions through multiple chains, many of which he classified as authentic.[3] Al-Ḥalabī (d. 1044/1635), while recounting the Hadith of Ghadīr in his book, described it as the strongest evidence used by the Shiites to argue for Imam ʿAlī's priority for the caliphate, citing that 30 companions heard it and attested to its validity. He affirmed its authenticity and dismissed the claims of others about its weak transmission as incorrect and unworthy of consideration.[4] Al-Albānī (d. 1999), one of the most prominent contemporary Sunni hadith scholars, after examining the various chains of the Hadith of Ghadīr, deemed at least nine of them as authentic and acknowledged its frequent transmission and definitiveness.[5]

Another indication of the frequent transmission and authenticity of the chain of the Hadith of Ghadīr is the numerous works authored over different eras dedicated to this hadith, its chains of transmission, and the reliability of its narrators. In addition to the previously mentioned works of al-Ṭabarī, al-Dhahabī, and Ibn ʿUqda, some researchers have compiled a collection of writings concerning the Hadith of Ghadīr. They have reported on the contents of these works, which were authored by both Sunni and Shiite scholars.[6]

The Text of the Hadith of Ghadīr: One of the most significant discussions regarding the Hadith of Ghadīr that requires examination is the meaning of the term *mawlā* in this hadith and its indication of the guardianship, leadership, and succession of Imam ʿAlī (a) to the Prophet (s). Sunni scholars claim that the term mawlā in this context does not signify leadership or succession. Consequently, they do not interpret the Hadith of Ghadīr as evidence of the obligation to obey ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) after the Prophet (s) or as a basis for his priority in the caliphate.[7]

To determine the intended meaning of the term mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr, two approaches can be adopted. First, what meaning(a) have Arab lexicographers assigned

1. ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, 7: 74.
2. Qasṭallānī, *al-Mawāhib al-ladunniyya*, 2: 684.
3. Haytamī, *al-Ṣawāʿiq al-muḥriqa*, 2: 355.
4. Ḥalabī, *al-Sīra al-Ḥalbiyya*, 3: 384.
5. Albānī, *Silsilat al-aḥādīth al-ṣaḥīḥa*, 4: 330-43.
6. See Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 1: 331-25; Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Ghadīr fī l-turāth al-Islāmī*.
7. See e.g., Shīrāzī, *al-Ishāra*, 398.

to this term, and how has it been used in the Quran? Second, considering the context of the Sermon of Ghadīr, what meaning did the Prophet (s) intend by this term, and based on historical evidence, what meaning did the people of that era—the audience of the Prophet's speech—understand from it? Shiite scholars, in addressing textual objections regarding the intended meaning of the term walī/mawlā, have employed Quranic, hadith-based, and lexicological arguments to demonstrate that the intended meaning of this term aligns with guardianship (*wilāya*) and succession (*khilāfa*).[1] Furthermore, some Sunni scholars, including Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī and others, have interpreted the term mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr to mean "priority in authority," a meaning consistent with guardianship and succession.[2]

The second approach involves determining the meaning of the term mawlā in the Prophet's sermon on the day of Ghadīr by considering both the contextual clues within the sermon itself and the historical evidence reflecting the understanding of the people of that time regarding the Prophet's statements about ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a). Here, we will adopt this method to ascertain the intended meaning of mawlā in this hadith.

In many narrations of the Hadith of Ghadīr found in primary Sunni hadith sources, the Prophet (s) took an acknowledgment from the attendees that he was more entitled and deserving of authority over them than their own selves.[3] This statement, which precedes the well-known phrase "Whoever I am his mawlā, ʿAlī (a) is his mawlā," clarifies the meaning of mawlā in this hadith as denoting entitlement and authority over the people. Thus, alternative interpretations offered by some Sunni scholars, such as rendering the term as "helper" or "friend," appear incorrect.[4]

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1. See e.g., Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 1: 609-93; Jaʿfarī, *Buḥūth ḥawl al-Ilāma; fī maʿna l-Imām wa l-Walī*; Milānī, *Ḥadīth al-Ghadīr*, 157-260. For further insight into the primary meaning of the term "*walī/mawlā*" in the Hadith of Ghadīr according to lexicographers, refer to the article "The Meaning of *Walī/Mawlā* in the Thought of Imami Theologians" in this section of the book.

2. Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat al-khawāṣ*, 37-40; see also Riḍwānī, *Ghadīrshināsī*, 127-30.

3. Various versions of this part of the Hadith of Ghadīr are found in primary sources. In some versions, the Prophet declares that he is more entitled to the believers than they are to themselves (*anā awlā bi l-muʾminīn*) (Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 110-11; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 118-19). In other narrations, he asserts that he is "more entitled to every believer" (*awlā bi-kulli muʾmin*) (Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 372; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 596, 597; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 30: 430, 32: 73-74; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1: 84; Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 1: 233; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 438), or takes an acknowledgment that he is closer to them than they are to themselves (Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar, *Ḥadīth ʿAlī b. Ḥujr*, 524-25; Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 374; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 586, 610; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 30: 430, 32: 29, 55, 75; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1: 84; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 108-10; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Āḥād wa l-mathānī*, 4: 325; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Sunna*, 2: 605, 606; Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 2: 235, 3: 34-35, 4: 41-42, 10: 212, 238; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 112; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 442; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 118, 119, 613).

4. See e.g., Rāzī, *al-Arbaʿīn*, 2: 299-300.

Another internal clue within the Hadith of Ghadīr pertains to the congratulations extended to Imam ʿAlī (a) by figures such as ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb following the Prophet's sermon. According to what is reported in primary Sunni sources, ʿUmar approached ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) after the Prophet's sermon and said: "Congratulations to you, O son of Abū Ṭālib (a), for you have become the mawlā of every believing man and woman."[1] This account is transmitted through Abū Hurayra[2] and al-Barrāʾ b. ʿĀzib[3] and has been deemed authentic by some Sunni scholars.[4]

Regardless of the discussion on the authenticity of this segment of Hadith al-Ghadīr or whether it is considered part of the hadith, ʿUmar's congratulatory remarks using these phrases reflect the understanding of the term mawlā among the people of that era. If the intended meaning of the term was merely "friend" or "supporter (*nāṣir*)," then, given that such concepts were already articulated earlier in the verse "But the faithful, men and women, are comrades of one another" (Q 9:71), ʿUmar's statement and congratulation would seem meaningless. His remarks indicate that the Prophet (s) had conferred upon ʿAlī (a) a position that had not been publicly proclaimed before. In light of the initial part of the sermon, this position pertains to wilāya (authority), and, as evidenced by ʿUmar's words, it signifies universal authority over all believing men and women.

The revelation of two verses, 67 and 3 of Surah al-Māʾida (5), known as the "Verse of Proclamation" and the "Verse of Completion," can be considered as evidence for the intended meaning of the term mawlā. As discussed earlier in the context of Quranic arguments for the guardianship and authority (*wilāya*) of Imam ʿAlī (a), before the event of Ghadīr, the verse, "O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord, and if you do not, you will not have communicated His message, and Allah shall protect you from the people. Indeed Allah does not guide the faithless lot," was revealed. According to what Sunni exegetes have reported from hadiths related to this verse, the "Verse of Proclamation" was revealed prior to the event of Ghadīr and concerned ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a).[5] If the intended meaning of mawlā were merely friendship or support for ʿAlī (a) and the obligation for people to love him, equating the proclamation of this matter with the communication of the entire religion, as stated in

1. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 372; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāna*, 2: 596, 610.
2. Daqqāq, *Fawāʾid*, 217; Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 8: 284; Shajarī, *Tartīb al-Amālī*, 1: 191-92, 343, 2: 101-2.
3. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 30: 430-31; Ājurī, *al-Sharīʿa*, 4: 2050-51; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Jamiʿ al-masānīd*, 1: 304.
4. Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Thadhkirat al-khawāṣ*, 35; Qasṭallānī, *al-Mawāhib al-ladinniyya*, 2: 684. However, in contrast, al-Albānī has classified both chains of this hadith, as transmitted through Abū Hurayra and al-Barrāʾ b. ʿĀzib, as weak (Albānī, *Silsilat al-aḥādīth al-ḍaʿīfa*, 10: 594, 686-87).
5. See e.g., Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīt al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm*, 4: 1172; Thaʿlabī, *al-Kashf wa l-bayān*, 4: 92.

the verse, would seem meaningless and trivial. This point, along with the revelation of the verse in this specific context, underscores the significance of the matter that the Prophet (s) was commanded to announce to the people. Moreover, as indicated by some earlier reports and accounts, the subject that the verse ordered to be proclaimed to the people was the guardianship of Imam ʿAlī (a).[1]

Another verse from Surah al-Māʾida that was revealed on the day of Ghadīr is its third verse. In the "Verse of Completion," it is stated: "Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam as your religion." This verse, like the "Verse of Proclamation," emphasizes the significance of what the Prophet (s) declared to the people. According to this verse, what the Prophet (s) announced on the day of Ghadīr was the cause of the perfection of religion, which is entirely inconsistent with interpretations of mawlā as simply friendship, support, or similar meanings. Moreover, as previously mentioned, according to hadiths narrated by Abū Hurayra[2] and Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī,[3] the matter that the Prophet (s) declared on this day, and by which the religion was completed, was the guardianship and succession of Imam ʿAlī (a). This is further supported by Abū Hurayra's account of the event, which references ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb congratulating Imam ʿAlī (a)— which was previously discussed.

Another piece of evidence related to the event of Ghadīr is the story of the revelation of Surah al-Maʿārij (70). After the Prophet (s) finished his sermon, a man approached him in protest and said: "You commanded us, on behalf of God, to testify that there is no god but Allah and that you are His Messenger. [Then] you ordered us to engage in jihad, perform pilgrimage, establish prayer, give zakat, and fast. We accepted all of these [and acted upon them]. [But now] you were not satisfied until you placed this young man over us and said, 'Whoever I am his mawlā, this man [ʿAlī (a)] is his mawlā. Has God commanded you to do this, or is this your own decision?" The Prophet (s) replied: "This is a command from God." The man turned back toward his mount, saying: "O God, if what Muḥammad says is true, then rain stones upon us from the sky or send down upon us a painful punishment!" Before he reached his mount, a stone fell from the sky and struck him, killing him. At that moment, the verse was revealed: "An asker asked for a

1. See Ibn Mardawayh, *Manāqib ʿAlī*, 239-40; Ḥasakānī, *Shawāhid al-tanzīl*, 1: 253-55; Suyūṭī, *al-Dur al-manthūr*, 2: 298.

2. Daqqāq, *Fawāʾid*, 217.

3. Ibn Mardawayh, *Manāqib ʿAlī*, 232.

punishment sure to befall" (Q 70:1).[1] This incident is reported in some Sunni exegetical and historical sources.[2] The significance of this event lies in the protester's understanding of the meaning of the word mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr. As stated in the account, the man objected, referencing the phrase "Whoever I am his mawlā, ʿAlī (a) is his mawlā," and took issue with the appointment of ʿAlī (a) over all people while he was still a young man. This understanding implies the concepts of guardianship and leadership.

Another piece of evidence related to the events of Ghadīr Khumm is a poem composed by Ḥassān b. Thābit about the Prophet's sermon at Ghadīr. In a part of this poem, recited with the Prophet's permission, after referencing the core message of the Hadith of Ghadīr—including obtaining the acknowledgment of those present regarding the Prophet's guardianship over them—it describes the moment when the Prophet (s) asked ʿAlī (a) to rise. The poem narrates the Prophet (s) saying: "O ʿAlī (a), rise, for I have chosen you as the leader (*imām*) and guide (*hādi*) after me."[3] In this poem, the meaning of mawlā is explicitly equated with "Imam" and "guide."

Some historical contexts outside the text of the Hadith of Ghadīr can also aid in understanding the intended meaning of the term mawlā in this hadith. One such context is the incident involving complaints by some companions regarding Imam ʿAlī's handling of spoils of war during a military expedition to Yemen. As the commander of this expedition, ʿAlī (a) allocated a portion of the spoils to himself, prompting objections from some participants in the campaign. Among these individuals was Khālid b. al-Walīd, who sent Burayda b. Ḥuṣayb al-Aslamī to the Prophet (s) to criticize ʿAlī's actions.[4]

Sunni hadith sources narrate the incident of the letter carried by Burayda and the Prophet's reaction to it. The crucial aspect of this account is the Prophet's response to the criticisms, in which he referred to Imam ʿAlī's guardianship over the people after him. According to reports in primary Sunni hadith sources, the Prophet (s) told Burayda b. Ḥuṣayb: "Do not speak ill of ʿAlī (a), for he is from me, and I am from him. He is your guardian (*walīyyukum*) after me."[5] In another hadith, it is reported that after the Prophet (s) elicited Burayda's acknowledgment of the Prophet's own guardianship over the people and his entitlement over the believers themselves, he said to him in language

1. Ḥasakānī, *Shawāhid al-tanzīl*, 2: 381-83.

2. Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 18: 278; Ḥalabī, *al-Sīra al-Ḥalabiyya*, 3: 302.

3. Ibn Mardawayh, *Manāqib ʿAlī*, 121, 233, 240; Abū Nuʿaym, *al-Nūr al-mushtaʿal*, 57-58. Perhaps the oldest source for these verses is the book *Majlisān min amālī al-Ḍubbī*, authored by al-Ḥusayn b. Hārūn al-Ḍubbī (d. 398/1007–8). A manuscript of this work is preserved in the Zahiriyya Library in Damascus under the catalog number 3799: 9.

4. See Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 160-61.

5. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 38: 117-18; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 441.

similar to the Hadith of Ghadīr: "Whoever I am his mawlā, ʿAlī (a) is his mawlā."[1] A similar account is narrated from ʿImrān b. Ḥuṣayn, with the difference that the Prophet (s), in response, explicitly referred to ʿAlī (a) as the walī of all believers after him, saying: "Leave ʿAlī (a) alone, for he is from me, and I am from him. He is the guardian (*walī*) of all believers after me."[2] In addition to the hadiths from both Burayda b. Ḥuṣayb and ʿImrān b. Ḥuṣayn being included in several of the *Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sitta* (the Six Canonical Books of Sunni Hadith), al-Albānī has also authenticated the chain of transmission for both reports.[3]

One notable detail in the various reports of this event is the inclusion of a temporal qualifier. As previously mentioned, in one account, the Prophet (s) introduced ʿAlī (a) as "your walī after me" (*walīyyukum baʿdī*) in his response to Burayda. Similarly, in the report narrated from ʿImrān b. Ḥuṣayn, the Prophet (s) stated that ʿAlī (a) is "the walī of every believer after me" (*walīyyu kulli muʾminin baʿdī*). This temporal qualifier clearly indicates that the meaning of walī could not have been limited to friendship, support, or similar interpretations.

Another significant point in these two narrations and other reports concerning wilāya and leadership is the context in which they were stated. ʿAlī (a) was the commander and leader (*amīr*) of the expedition to Yemen, and the complaints were related to one of his leadership responsibilities. This context, along with the use of the terms mawlā/walī, highlights their meaning as referring to wilāya (guardianship or authority) and *imāra* (leadership). Phrases that sometimes convey a concept similar to the statement "Whoever I am his mawlā" in the Hadith of Ghadīr and at other times are identical to it, clarify the intended meaning of the term as used by the Prophet (s) in his sermon at Ghadīr.

In some reports, it is mentioned that certain people, including Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, a companion of the Prophet (s), congratulate Imam ʿAlī (a) with the title mawlā. To emphasize the meaning of mawlā and with reference to the concept of *wilāyat al-ʿitq* (the authority of emancipation),[4] Imam ʿAlī (a) asked them why they used this title. In

1. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 374; Aḥamd b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 38: 32; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 309, 437, 438. In some other versions of this hadith, the phrase "Whoever I am his mawlā" appears without the context of obtaining acknowledgment (Maʿmar b. Rāshid, *Jāmiʿ*, 11: 225; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 38: 58, 133; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 437).

2. Ṭayālisī, *Musnad*, 2: 168; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 372; Aḥamd b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 33: 154; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, 6: 73; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 440.

3. Albānī, Silsilat al-aḥādīth al-ṣaḥīḥa, 5: 261-64.

4. *Wilāyat al-ʿitq* (or *wilāʾ al-ʿitq*) refers to a non-kinship relationship established between a freed slave and the person who emancipated them. Under specific conditions, the emancipator inherits from the freed slave.

response, they cited the phrase "Whoever I am his mawlā" from the Hadith of Ghadīr. This account has been narrated with varying wording in Sunni sources.[1] In another report, a young man approached Abū Hurayra and, after confirming with him that he had heard the phrases "Whoever I am his mawlā" from the Hadith of Ghadīr and the part where the Prophet (s) said, "O God, be the guardian of whoever accepts his guardianship and an enemy to whoever takes him as his enemy," he declared: "I disavow you [because] I testify that you opposed him whose guardianship you were obliged to accept and supported the guardianship of one who opposed him."[2] According to some accounts, this incident took place during the time of Muʿāwiya, when Abū Hurayra had accompanied him to Kufa.[3] Considering these two reports, it becomes clear that the people understood the term mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr to signify leadership and governance. This is evident because, in the report where Imam ʿAlī (a) was addressed with the title mawlā, it referred to a form of authority beyond wilāyat al-ʿitq. Likewise, in the young man's objection to Abū Hurayra, the criticism pertained to his acceptance of Muʿāwiya's caliphate and authority.

Historical evidence of the public understanding across different periods is not limited to these two cases or to the instance of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb congratulating ʿAlī (a). A deeper examination of historical sources reveals additional examples, many of which pertain to the era of Muʿāwiya's rule. During a Hajj pilgrimage, Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān summoned an elderly woman who was a supporter of ʿAlī (a) and asked her why she loved ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) and harbored animosity toward him (Muʿāwiya). In explaining her love for ʿAlī (a), the woman referred to his care for orphans and the poor and cited the Hadith of Ghadīr, identifying the guardianship the Prophet (s) had conferred upon him as the basis for her recognition of his leadership. She further stated that her hatred for Muʿāwiya stemmed from his waging war against someone more deserving of the caliphate.[4] The juxtaposition of the guardianship established by the Prophet (s) for ʿAlī (a) with Imam ʿAlī's greater entitlement to the leadership underscores the public understanding of wilāya and "governance" as conveyed in the Hadith of Ghadīr.

In another report, it is mentioned that Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, during a conversation with Muʿāwiya, criticized him for waging war against ʿAlī (a) and, referencing the phrase

1. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 366; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 572; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 38: 541; Baghawī, *Muʿjam al-ṣaḥāba*, 4: 364; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 4: 173. Al-Albānī has authenticated some of these hadiths (Albānī, *Silsilat al-aḥādīth al-ṣaḥīḥa*, 4: 340).

2. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 369; Shajarī, *Tartīb al-Amālī*, 192.

3. See Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Thadhkirat al-khawāṣ*, 83-84; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 4: 68.

4. Ḍubbī, *Akhbār al-wāfidāt*, 40; Zamakhshrī, *Rabīʿ al-abrār*, 3: 152.

"Whoever I am his mawlā" from the Hadith of Ghadīr, affirmed that Imam ʿAlī (a) was more deserving of leadership than Muʿāwiya. Addressing Muʿāwiya, Saʿd said: "You fought against ʿAlī (a) while knowing that he was more deserving of this position [i.e., the caliphate] than you." When Muʿāwiya asked him why he believed this, Saʿd replied: "Because the Messenger of God said: 'Whoever I am his mawlā, then ʿAlī (a) is his mawlā...'"[1] Similarly, when ʿAdī b. Ḥātim was summoned to Muʿāwiya's court, he criticized Muʿāwiya for occupying the caliphate while ʿAlī (a) was more deserving of it. He said: "Did not the Messenger of God appoint him [i.e., ʿAlī (a)] as a standard [i.e., a criterion] on the Day of Ghadīr Khumm and declare: 'Whoever I am his mawlā, then ʿAlī (a) is his mawlā...'?"[2]

Another key point that aids in understanding the Prophet's intent behind the term mawlā is Imam ʿAlī's appeal to the Hadith of Ghadīr. In a hadith known as the Hadith of al-Munāshada, Imam ʿAlī (a) invoked this hadith to assert his rightful claim to the caliphate. During a gathering with the members of the caliphate council, he enumerated his virtues and sought their acknowledgment of the truth of his statements. Declaring that the first two caliphs had assumed the position of leadership while he was more deserving of it, Imam ʿAlī (a) also cited the Hadith of Ghadīr as evidence. Some Sunni sources have narrated this incident.[3]

Another instance of Imam ʿAlī's appeal to the same phrase from the Hadith of Ghadīr occurred during his caliphate. When certain remarks from the people reached him in the area of al-Raḥba, he ascended the pulpit and called upon the companions of the Prophet (s) to testify to hearing the Prophet's statement on the Day of Ghadīr: "Whoever I am his mawlā, then ʿAlī (a) is his mawlā. O God, be the guardian of whoever accepts his guardianship, and an enemy to whoever opposes him." Several of the Prophet's companions bore witness to the authenticity of this hadith, including twelve individuals who had fought alongside the Prophet (s) in the Battle of Badr. This account is cited in primary Sunni hadith sources, with some scholars affirming the authenticity of its chain

1. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 80.

2. Ḍubbī, Akhbār al-wāfidīn, 23.

3. Ibn Mardawayh, *Manāqib ʿAlī*, 127-33 (through multiple chains of transmission); Ibn al-Maghāzilī, *Manāqib*, 170-74; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 22: 431-36 (through multiple chains of transmission); Suyūṭī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 18: 304-5; see also Ḥākim, *Faḍā'il Fāṭima*, 42. After citing this hadith, al-Dhahabī dismisses it as weak (Dhahabī, *Risālat ṭuruq Ḥadīth man kutu mawlāh*, 41-43).

of transmission.[1] What is noteworthy about these two appeals is that both were made in contexts where the issue of governance and the caliphate was under discussion.

Imam ʿAlī (a) made this statement during the council convened to select the caliph, and no one objected to or disputed its validity. In another instance, concerning the legitimacy of his caliphate during his rule, this statement was affirmed by the testimony of twelve companions of the Prophet (s). The correlation between Imam ʿAlī's appeal to the phrase "Whoever I am his mawlā" from the Hadith of Ghadīr and events directly tied to matters of the caliphate and governance underscores the implication of the term mawlā for guardianship and leadership.

These contextual clues, in addition to the textual and historical evidence related to the hadith and the event of Ghadīr, clarify the meaning intended by the Prophet (s) for the term mawlā in the sermon at Ghadīr. This meaning, without reference to other interpretations of the term—such as "friend," "helper," or other meanings unrelated to leadership and Imamate—exclusively pertains to the aspects of guardianship (*wilāya*) and leadership (*imāma*).

Considering the textual and chain-of-transmission analysis of the Hadith of Ghadīr, it can be asserted that this event undoubtedly occurred, given the authenticity of its chain as recognized by both Sunni and Shiite scholars, particularly Sunni authorities. Furthermore, based on the internal textual clues within the Hadith of Ghadīr, along with the historical evidence surrounding the event and the contextual clues reflecting the public understanding of the term mawlā in the hadith, one can confidently affirm the Hadith of Ghadīr's indication of Imam ʿAlī's rightful claim to the caliphate and imamate.

4. Hadiths of "al-Wilāya"

As previously noted, early Sunni hadith sources contain hadiths in which the Prophet (s) explicitly identifies ʿAlī (a) as the walī of the people after him. At times, the Prophet (s) addressed Imam ʿAlī (a), saying: "You are my walī (*walīyyī*) in this world and the Hereafter."[2] According to other hadiths, the Prophet (s) emphasized this matter publicly, declaring: "He [ʿAlī (a)] is your walī after me (*walīyyukum baʿdī*)."[3] In another group of hadiths, the Prophet (s) introduced Imam ʿAlī (a) as the walī of all believers, stating: "He

1. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 368; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 585, 682; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 2: 71, 263-63, 268-69, 32: 55-56, 38: 541-42; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Sunna*, 2: 607; Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 2: 133-34, 10: 212; Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 438, 442, 444. Al-Abānī accepts the authenticity of some of its chains of transmission (see Albānī, *Silsilat al-aḥādīth al-ṣaḥīḥa*, 4: 331, 338).

2. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 5: 178; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Sunna*, 2: 603; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 143, 145.

3. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 38: 117; Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 441.

is, after me, the walī of all believers (*walīyyu kulli muʾminin baʿdī*)."[1] In some hadiths, such as the Prophet's declaration at Ghadīr, he said: "Whoever I am his walī, then ʿAlī (a) is his walī."[2] This statement, with the same wording as recorded in Sunni hadith sources, was repeated on occasions like the incident of *Sadd al-Abwāb* (the closing of the doors)[3] and during Imam ʿAlī's expedition to Yemen.[4]

5. Hadiths of "al-Imāra" and "al-Imāma"

As previously mentioned, God, in verse 59 of Surah al-Nisāʾ (4), issues a general command for the people to obey Him, the Prophet (s), and the *ūlī al-amr* (those vested with authority). Additionally, in verse 3 of Surah al-Māʾida (5), through a specific description, the walī is identified. According to hadith and exegetical sources, this individual is ʿAlī (a). One of Imam ʿAlī's most significant titles is *Amīr al-Muʾminīn* (*a*) (Commander of the Faithful). ʿAlī (a) b. Ṭāwūs al-Ḥillī (d. 664/1266), in his work *al-Yaqīn bi-ikhtiṣāṣ mawlānā ʿAlī* (*a*) *ʿalayh al-salām bi-amrat al-muʾminīn* (Certainty in the exclusive attribution of the title "Commander of the Faithful" to our guardian ʿAlī (a), peace be upon him), compiles hadiths from Sunni sources demonstrating that the Prophet (s) himself referred to ʿAlī (a) with this title.[5]

The reference to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) with the title "*Amīr*" can be interpreted as an indication of his position of "leadership" (*imāra*) and "guardianship" (*wilāya*). In one report, the Prophet (s) introduces ʿAlī (a) as the leader of the virtuous. It is narrated from Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī that during the event of the al-Ḥudaybiyya Peace Treaty in 6/628, the Prophet (s) raised ʿAlī's hand and proclaimed loudly: "This [ʿAlī (a)] is the leader of the virtuous and truthful (*amīr al-barar*) and the slayer of the wicked and immoral. Whoever supports him will be supported [by God], and whoever abandons him will be abandoned [by God]. I am the city of knowledge, and ʿAlī (a) is its gate. So whoever seeks knowledge must come through the gate." This hadith, which highlights both the leadership of Imam ʿAlī (a) and his elevated scholarly status, has been transmitted in

1. See e.g., Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, 6: 73; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 309, 432, 440.
2. See e.g., Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 308, 417.
3. Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Sunna*, 3: 603.
4. See e.g., Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 38: 58, 133; Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 10: 258; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 437.
5. See Ibn Ṭāwūs, *al-Yaqīn*, 1: 129-463.

Sunni hadith collections.[1] Some sources, however, place this event during the Battle of Banū al-Naḍīr in 4/626.[2]

In Sunni hadith collections, the Prophet (s) referred to ʿAlī (a) as the "Imam of the God-wary (*Imām al-Muttaqīn*)." In a hadith narrated by Ibn ʿAbbās, the Prophet (s) is reported to have said regarding the Day of Judgment: "A caller will proclaim: 'This is ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), the executor of the Messenger of the Lord of all worlds, the leader of the God-wary, and the commander of the radiant-faced [i.e., the believers].'"[3] It is also narrated from another companion of the Prophet (s), Asʿad b. Zurāra (d. 1/623), that the Prophet (s) said: "Three qualities regarding ʿAlī (a) have been revealed to me: He is the master of Muslims, the leader of the God-wary, and the commander of the radiant-faced."[4] This hadith is further narrated by Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān (d. 36/656)[5] and ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUkaym al-Juhanī (d. 88/707),[6] both of whom were companions of the Prophet (s).

In another hadith, the Prophet (s) referred to Imam ʿAlī (a) as the "leader of my allies (*Imām Awliyāʾī*)." Anas b. Mālik (d. 93/709) narrates from the Prophet (s), who said: "He [ʿAlī (a)] is the banner of guidance, a sign of faith, the leader of my allies, and a light for all who obey me."[7] This hadith is also narrated by Abū Burza al-Aslamī.[8]

In addition to referring to ʿAlī (a) with the titles "*Imām*" and "*Amīr*," there are other hadiths found in Sunni sources, in which the Prophet (s) equates obedience to himself with obedience to divine commands, and then, states that obedience to ʿAlī (a) is equal to obedience to himself, and consequently, disobedience to ʿAlī (a) constitutes disobedience to him and, consequently, rebellion against God's commands.

Given their content, these hadiths are sometimes conveyed in a general manner. In one instance, the Prophet (s) publicly commanded obedience to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), saying: "Whoever obeys me has truly obeyed God, and whoever disobeys me has

1. Ibn al-Muqriʾ, *al-Muʿjam*, 381; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 140; Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 3: 181, 4: 441; Ibn al-Maghāzilī, *Manāqib*, 135, 141; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 226, 383.
2. Khaʷārazmī, *al-Manāqib*, 200.
3. Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 11: 113-14, 13: 123-24; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 326-28.
4. Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 148; Ibn Qāniʿ, *Muʿjam al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 599; Ibn al-Maghāzilī, *Manāqib*, 162.
5. Ibn al-Maghāzilī, *Manāqib*, 89.
6. Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-ṣaghīr*, 2: 192; Abū Nuʿaym, *K. Tārīkh Aṣbahān*, 2: 200, 276; Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawāʾid*, 9: 121.
7. Abū Nuʿaym, *Ḥulyat al-awliyāʾ*, 1: 66; Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 14: 102; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 329-30; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Mukhtār*, 1: 98-99.
8. Abū Nuʿaym, *Ḥulyat al-awliyāʾ*, 1: 67; Ibn al-Maghāzilī, *Manāqib*, 97; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 291-92.

disobeyed God. [Likewise,] whoever obeys ʿAlī (a) has obeyed me, and whoever disobeys ʿAlī (a) has disobeyed me."[1] At other times, this hadith is addressed directly by the Prophet (s) to Imam ʿAlī (a). In this version, the Prophet (s) says: "O ʿAlī (a), whoever obeys me has obeyed God, and whoever disobeys me has disobeyed God. [Similarly,] whoever obeys you has obeyed me, and whoever disobeys you has disobeyed me."[2]

Another group of hadiths found in various sources can be connected to the ones emphasizing the necessity of obedience to Imam ʿAlī (a). In these hadiths, the Prophet (s) equates separation from himself with separation from God and considers separation from ʿAlī (a) as separation from himself, and thus from God. Like the obedience-related hadiths, these hadiths sometimes address the public, warning them against diverging from ʿAlī's path. One version states: "Whoever separates from ʿAlī (a) has separated from me, and whoever abandons me has abandoned God."[3] In some sources, this statement is attributed to the Prophet (s) during the expedition to Yemen, directed at Burayda b. Ḥuṣayb.[4] In another group of hadiths, the Prophet (s) directly addresses ʿAlī (a), saying: "O ʿAlī (a), whoever separates from me has separated from God, and whoever abandons you has abandoned me."[5]

By examining the hadiths in which the Prophet (s) designates ʿAlī (a) as the leader of the God-wary and the truthful, alongside other reports in which the Prophet (s), on several occasions—particularly during the expedition to Yemen—introduces ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) as the *walī* of all believers after him, and in addition to the hadiths wherein the Prophet (s) commands universal obedience to Imam ʿAlī (a) and equates such obedience with obeying himself and following divine commands, one can discern that the collective connotation of these hadiths is the legitimacy of Imam ʿAlī's right to leadership and succession.

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1. Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 130; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 270, 307; ʿAsqalānī, *Itḥāf al-mahara*, 14: 193; Suyūṭī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 8: 580.
2. Aṭrāblusī, *Min ḥadīthi Khaythama*, 72; Ismāʿīlī, *al-Muʿjam*, 1: 485; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 139; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 306, 306-7; Muḥib al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī, *al-Riyāḍ al-nuḍra*, 3: 123.
3. Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 12: 423; Ismāʿīlī, *al-Muʿjam*, 3: 800; Ibn al-Maghāzilī, *Manāqib*, 308; Suyūṭī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 9: 590, 591.
4. Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-awsaṭ*, 6: 162; Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-fawā'id*, 9: 128.
5. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Fḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 570; Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 9: 455; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 133, 158; Ibn al-Maghāzilī, *Manāqib*, 309, 347; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 307; Muḥib al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī, *al-Riyāḍ al-naḍira*, 3: 123; Ibn Kathīr, *Jāmiʿ al-masānīd*, 9: 453; Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawā'id*, 9: 135; ʿAsqalānī, *Itḥāf al-mahara*, 14: 193; Suyūṭī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 12: 583.

6. Hadiths of Inheritance (*al-wirātha*) and Testament (*al-wiṣāya*)

Some of the hadiths from the Prophet (s) regarding ʿAlī (a) pertain to "inheritance" (*wirātha*) and "testament" or "executorship" (*wiṣāya*). In one hadith, the Prophet (s) states: "Indeed, my appointed executor (*waṣī*) and heir (*wārith*)—the one who will settle my debts and fulfill my promises—is ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a)."[1] This hadith, expressed with slight variations in wording but identical in meaning, is repeated across various sources.[2] Ibn Mardawayh (d. 410/1019) compiled hadiths on the inheritance and succession of Imam ʿAlī (a) (a) through multiple chains of transmission and with diverse wording.[3] Al-Ḥākim al-Ḥasakānī (d. 490/1097), citing the virtues and ranks of Imam ʿAlī (a), including numerous hadiths on succession and inheritance, enumerates some of what he considers authentic among them.[4]

What stands out in these hadiths is how they signify the guardianship (*al-wilāya*) and leadership (*al-imāma*) of Imam ʿAlī (a). Understanding who is referred to as a waṣī (executor) in Islamic discourse, the duties associated with this role, and its conceptual usage in historical and hadith texts, as well as examining how, according to various Islamic sources, ʿAlī (a) became the inheritor of the Prophet (s) and what he inherited will illuminate the relationship between these two concepts and the broader notions of al-imāma and al-wilāya.

As previously mentioned, during the event of *Yawm al-Inḍār* (the Day of Warning), the Prophet (s) invited his close relatives to embrace Islam and called upon them to volunteer in supporting him in this mission. The Prophet (s) declared that whoever stepped forward to assist him would be appointed as his waṣī (executor or successor). Among those present, only ʿAlī (a) volunteered. In some narrations of this event, the Prophet (s) explicitly used waṣī together with succession (*khilāfa*).[5] In other versions, while the promise does not explicitly mention al-wiṣāya, it includes the responsibility of fulfilling the Prophet's promises and succession after him.[6]

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1. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 615.

2. See Baghawī, *Muʿjam al-ṣaḥhba*, 4: 363; Ibn al-Maghāzilī, *Manāqib*, 1: 261-62; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 392 (through multiple chains of transmission); Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat al-khawāṣ*, 47 (which has been authenticated); Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 4: 240; Muḥib al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī, *al-Riāḍ al-naḍira*, 3: 138.

3. See Ibn Mardawayh, *Manāqib*, 100-6.

4. See Ḥasakānī, *Shawāhid al-tanzīl*, 1: 485-90.

5. See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 321; Baghawī, *Maʿālim al-tanzīl*, 3: 481; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 48-50 (through multiple chains of transmission); Suyūṭī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, 17: 664-65.

6. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 650, 700; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 4: 32; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Jāmiʿ al-masānīd*, 6: 224. However, in this version, succession is confined to succession within the Prophet's kin.

The juxtaposition of the two concepts of "al-wiṣāya" and "caliphate" by the Prophet (s) may indicate a connection between these two notions during the Prophetic period. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, Salmān al-Fārisī had asked the Prophet (s) about his waṣī (successor). In response, the Prophet (s) introduced ʿAlī (a) as his waṣī by referencing the wiṣāya of Joshua for Prophet (s) Moses.[1] By carefully examining what historical sources say about Joshua, it becomes clear that he was the successor of Moses among the Children of Isreal (Israelites) after Moses's death.[2] Attention to this report further reveals the conceptual link between al-wiṣāya (designation of a successor or executor) and succession.

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the Prophet (s), in addition to referring to Imam ʿAlī (a) as the "Imam of the God-wary," also introduced him as the "al-waṣī of the Messenger of God," that is, his own successor.[3] The fact that the Prophet (s), when describing ʿAlī's status and virtues, juxtaposed the concept of "wiṣāya" and the title "Imam" may serve as evidence of a conceptual connection between wiṣāya (succession) and imāma (leadership).

On the other hand, the concepts of wiṣāya and waṣī in Islamic literature and jurisprudence can also shed light on the understanding of this notion. In Islamic jurisprudence, the waṣī (executor) of a deceased person who has left behind orphans acts as the father's representative for those orphans. The waṣī provides for them, conducts transactions on their behalf, and fulfills their needs.[4] Based on this definition, it can be said that a waṣī essentially takes on the responsibilities of the deceased after their death. Historical accounts of the actions of the *awṣiyā'* (successors or executors) of the deceased further corroborate this. For instance, in one report, Hāshim b. Ḥamza is mentioned as the waṣī of most of the deceased from the family of al-Zubayr. According to the same report, he managed their affairs with competence and integrity.[5]

This jurisprudential definition of a waṣī pertains to the successors or executors of ordinary individuals who have passed away. However, what about the status of a waṣī for prominent figures such as Prophets, rulers, or caliphs? In addition to the connection

1. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 615; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 6: 221; Muḥib al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī, *al-Riāḍ al-naḍira*, 3: 138; Ibn Kathīr, *Jāmiʿ al-masānīd*, 3: 528-29; Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawā'id*, 9: 113-14. It is noteworthy that al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971) interpreted the term wiṣāya in this hadith as referring to familial designation and did not establish a connection between it and the concept of caliphate. What might challenge this interpretation, however, is the status of Joshua following the death of Moses, as he held the position of that Prophet's successor.

2. See Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 12.

3. See e.g., Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 148; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-Ṣaghīr*, 2: 192.

4. See e.g., Kawsaj, *Masā'il al-Imām Aḥmad*, 8: 4370.

5. Zubayrī, *K. Nasab Quraysh*, 241.

between the concepts of wiṣāya and succession, as seen in the case of Joshua as the waṣī and successor of Prophet (s) Moses, further examples can be found in historical sources. According to one report, Seth (Shīth b. Ādam), the son of Prophet (s) Adam, was the waṣī and successor of his father.[1]

In Islamic thought and historical examples of the application of the concept of wiṣāya in Islamic history, insights into the connection between wiṣāya and succession can be found. One such example is Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī's protest sermon during the caliphate of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān. In this sermon, Abū Dharr declared that Prophet (s) Muḥammad (a) was the heir to the knowledge of Adam and the other divine Prophets, and that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) was the waṣī of the Prophet (s) and the inheritor of his knowledge, presenting him as the most suitable candidate for the Prophet's succession. Emphasizing ʿAlī's right to the caliphate, he added: "O community that has been bewildered after the death of their Prophet (s), if you had prioritized the one whom God prioritized and set aside the one whom God put aside, affirming leadership and inheritance (*al-wilaya wa al-wiṣāya*) for the Prophet's family, you would have benefited from [the blessings] above and beneath you."[2] In Abū Dharr's words, the connection between the concepts of wiṣāya and succession is evident, as is the pairing of the notions of wilāya (leadership) and inheritance.

The peak of the connection between the concepts of wiṣāya and caliphate might be observed in the Abbasid movement's call to rise against the Umayyad rule. Numerous examples from this period demonstrate the use of wiṣāya as a foundation for legitimizing Abbasid claims to the caliphate. Some attributed the appeal of joining the Abbasid movement against the Umayyads to the presence of wiṣāya among them.[3] According to historical accounts, the Abbasids claimed that the right to the caliphate had passed from ʿAlī (a) to his son Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya. He, in turn, transferred this right to his son Abū Hāshim, who, through a waṣīyya (will), passed it to Muḥammad b. ʿAlī (a), the grandson of ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, and his descendants. In this way, the right to the caliphate was established with the Abbasids. Thus, Muḥammad b. ʿAlī (a) was regarded

1. Ibn Qurtayba, *al-Maʿārif*, 20.

2. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 171.

3. See e.g., Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 4: 208-9. One of the companions of Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī, the leader of the Abbasid uprising in Khorasan, expressed in a poem that the reason for his allegiance to the movement was the presence of wiṣāya within the Banū al-ʿAbbās family. He stated: "Say to the emir, the trustee of the Imam, The waṣī of the waṣī, of the waṣī, of the waṣī..." This demonstrates the connection between the concepts of wiṣāya and imāma.

as the *waṣī* of Abū Hāshim and the inheritor of the right to the caliphate.[1] During the conflict between Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī and al-Manṣūr al-ʿAbbāsī, Abū Muslim approached ʿĪsā b. Mūsā, the grandson of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī (a). He invoked his wiṣāya and his resulting right to the caliphate to encourage him to depose al-Manṣūr.[2]

Considering the entirety of these clues, as well as the concept of wiṣāya in Muslim juridical thought and its historical application, one can recognize a conceptual connection between wiṣāya and khilāfa. This point elucidates the meaning of wiṣāya hadiths in relation to the rightful caliphate of Imam ʿAlī (a).

As previously mentioned, in addition to the wiṣāya hadiths, the Prophet (s) introduced ʿAlī (a) as his "heir" (*al-wārith*). One occasion where the Prophet (s) explicitly affirmed ʿAlī's inheritance and wiṣāya was during the event of brotherhood pledge among the Muslims. In this event, the Prophet (s) established bonds of brotherhood among the Muslims and designated ʿAlī (a) as his own brother. On one account of this incident, the Prophet (s) said to ʿAlī (a): "By the One who sent me with truth, I did not delay you except for [brotherhood with myself]. For me, you are like Aaron was to Moses, except there will be no Prophet (s) after me. You are my brother and my heir (*wārithī*)." ʿAlī (a) asked, "What will I inherit from you, O Messenger of God?" The Prophet (s) replied, "What was inherited by the Prophets before me." ʿAlī (a) then asked, "What did the Prophets before you leave as inheritance?" The Prophet (s) said, "The Book of God and the practices of the Prophets…"[3] In another account, it is reported from ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās (d. 68/687) that ʿAlī (a) said: "By God, I am his [the Prophet's] brother, his guardian (*walīyyuhu*), his cousin, and the heir of his knowledge (*wārithu ʿilmih*). So who has more right to him than I?"[4]

In many of the inheritance (*al-wirātha*) hadiths, this concept appears alongside wiṣāya. Considering the explanation of wiṣāya in terms of Imam ʿAlī's rightful caliphate, a similar connection can be envisioned between wirātha and khilāfa. Even setting this point aside and focusing instead on the explanation of what ʿAlī (a) inherited from the Prophet (s) in terms of the Book of God and the practices of the Prophets, as well as his inheritance of the Prophet's knowledge, one could argue that the wirātha hadiths at least

1. See Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 5: 382.

2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 4: 185.

3. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 636, 666; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Āḥād wa l-mathānī*, 5: 170; see also Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 16.

4. Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 136.

indicate the scholarly authority of Imam ʿAlī (a). Nonetheless, these hadiths could also be interpreted as supporting the case for ʿAlī's rightful caliphate.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion represents a portion of the Quranic, historical, and hadith-based evidence for the Imamate of Imam ʿAlī (a). This evidence, presented with an effort to rely on primary Sunni sources, affirms the establishment of ʿAlī's guardianship (*wilāya*) and Imamate. In this argument from textual evidence for ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib's Imamate, the meanings of key terms used in these texts were contextualized within their historical framework, thereby supporting the claim advanced by Shiites.

The Meaning of "*Walī/Mawlā*" in Imami Theology

Introduction

A central tenet of Imami Shiite belief is the conviction that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) was the immediate successor to the Prophet (s). Imami theologians have supported this belief by citing Quranic verses and hadiths from the Prophet (s). One such verse is Quran 5:55, known as "the verse of *wilāya*": "Your guardian (*walīyyukum*) is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down." According to hadiths from both Sunni and Shiite sources, this verse was revealed concerning Imam ʿAlī (a).[1] Another proof cited by Shiites regarding Imam ʿAlī's right to succession is the Hadith of Ghadīr, specifically the statement of the Prophet (s): "Whoever I am his *mawlā*, ʿAlī (a) is his *mawlā*." Shiites interpret the terms walī and mawlā in both the verse and the Hadith of Ghadīr to mean "guardian," "master," or "one with priority over others."

Based on the meaning of the term "walī," the verse of wilāya can be understood as follows: "Your guardian, master, and one with priority over you is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down." Given that, according to both Sunni and Shiite sources, this verse was revealed concerning Imam ʿAlī (a), it serves as significant evidence for his wilāya and caliphate following the Prophet (s). Similarly, considering the meaning of the term mawlā, the phrase "whoever

1. For more information, see the chapter "Imam ʿAlī's Imamate: Arguments and Textual Evidence" in this book.

I am his mawlā, ʿAlī (a) is also his mawlā" from the Hadith of Ghadīr can be rendered as: "Whoever I am the guardian, master, and one with priority over, then ʿAlī (a) is also their guardian, master, and one with authority." This interpretation underscores Imam ʿAlī's position of wilāya, caliphate, and succession after the Prophet (s).

In contrast, Sunni theologians interpret the term walī/mawlā not as "guardian" or "master," but rather as "beloved" (*al-muḥibb*), "friend," or "helper" (*al-nāṣir*). Based on this lexicological meaning of "walī/mawlā," they argue that these arguments cannot be taken to imply the Imamate or succession of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a). As a result, there has been considerable debate in Sunni theological sources regarding the meaning of mawlā, particularly in relation to the Hadith of Ghadīr.

Although, based on textual evidence and a historical view of how people in the Prophet's era understood this sermon and their interpretation of the term walī/mawlā, one can infer its equivalence to "guardianship" and "Imamate,"[1] the Sunni scholars' claim regarding the lexical meaning of walī/mawlā makes further investigation important. Thus, this study first offers an overview of what Sunni theologians have stated about the meaning of walī/mawlā in their writings, followed by an explanation of the responses provided by Imami theologians to these claims. Another part of this article consists of the arguments of 19 Imami scholars and theologians, drawn from Shiite theological sources spanning from 4th/10th century to the contemporary period. This study aims to summarize the reasoning presented by Imami scholars regarding the determination of the meaning of walī/mawlā in the verse of wilāya and the Hadith of Ghadīr and to elucidate the methodologies they employed in their arguments.

A Historical Glance at Theological Debates on the Meaning of Walī/Mawlā in Sunni Thought

By examining encyclopedias that address theological terms in Sunni thought, it becomes clear that the term walī/mawlā has been interpreted as implying "support" (*al-nuṣra*). For example, Samīḥ Daghim, in his encyclopedia, defines muwālāt and walī as "support,"[2] a meaning consistent with what Sunni theologians have presented in their theological sources.

There is no information regarding when theological debates over the meaning of walī/mawlā began. The earliest account of such a debate can be traced to the late first century or early 2nd/7-8th. This account, referencing the Hadith of Ghadīr, does not

1. See the section on bibliography and the article of "Imamate," the section on Ghadīr.
2. See Daghīm, *Mawsūʿat muṣṭalaḥāt ʿilm al-Kalām*, 2: 1347 "Muwālāt," 1463 "Walī."

interpret mawlā as implying leadership or governance.[1] According to a narration from Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), he refrained from discussing the meaning of mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr and advised that the hadith be transmitted as it is.[2] As will be seen, and based on certain hadiths, questions about the meaning of mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr arose during the imamate of Imam al-Sajjād (61–95/680–712).[3] In Sunni theological sources dating from 5th/11th century onward, the meaning of the term walī has been a recurring topic of discussion.

Among Sunni theologians, it can be said that Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013) was the first to discuss the intended meaning of the term mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr. Emphasizing that the word's meaning is not restricted to "having priority (*al-awlā*)" and suggesting its equivalence with other concepts such as "supporter (*al-nāṣir*)," "cousin (*ibn ʿamm*)," "freed or freeing person (*al-muʿtaq wa-l-muʿtiq*)," "friend (*al-muḥibb*)," "neighbor (*al-jār*)," "son-in-law (*al-ṣihr*)," and "ally (*al-ḥalīf*)," he proposed two possible interpretations of the phrase "*man kuntu mawlāhu*" in the hadith. He understood mawlā to mean either "supporter" or "beloved." In the first case, the phrase would mean: "Whoever I am the supporter (*nāṣir*) of in their religion, then ʿAlī (a) is their supporter." In the second case, it would mean: "Whoever I am beloved to, then ʿAlī (a) is beloved to them."[4]

Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025), a prominent Muʿtazilite scholar, referencing Quran 5:55—where walī is attributed exclusively to God, His Messenger, and those who give zakat while bowing in prayer—rejected equating the term with leadership and governance (Imamate) or guardianship (*wilāya*). He interpreted *walī* in this verse as supporter (*al-nāṣir*).[5] Elsewhere, addressing the Hadith of Ghadīr and responding to Imami arguments for Imam ʿAlī's guardianship, he denied that *mawlā* could mean "guardian" or "leader." Instead, ʿAbd al-Jabbār emphasized its equivalence with support (*muwālāt*) and assistance (*al-nuṣra*), also asserting that meanings of compassion and

1. See Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 5: 245. Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845) reports this account from al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan (alive in 85/845), the son of Imam al-Ḥasan. However, considering the chain of transmission and the variations in the narrator's name across different versions of this report (see Aṣbahānī, *Juzʾ Muḥammad b. ʿĀṣim*, 125; Khallāl, *al-Sunna*, 2: 250), it can be surmised that the speaker might have been either al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) or Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan (d. 145/762). The attribution to al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan appears to result from either a narrator's error or textual corruption (see Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 7: 117; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, 14: 416).

2. Khallāl, *al-Sunna*, 2: 346-47, 348.

3. See below.

4. See Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd al-awāʾil*, 451-56.

5. See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī*, 20: 133-39.

mercy are implicit in all uses of the root "*w-l-y*" in the Hadith of Ghadīr.[1] In another work, he defined muwālāt as support (*nuṣra*) and friend (*maḥabba*).[2] However, as will be discussed, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044) responded to these claims in his *al-Shāfī fī l-Imāma*.

Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī (al-Iṣfahānī) (d. 430/1038), equating the meanings of walī and mawālī with friend, interpreted the Hadith of Ghadīr as emphasizing love for ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a). He viewed the purpose of the hadith as encouraging others to love ʿAlī (a), citing a saying of the Prophet (s) that only hypocrites lack love for him.[3] Abū Isḥāq al-Shīrāzī (d. 476/1083) interpreted mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr to mean supporter (*al-nāṣir*), confirming this interpretation with a Quranic verse and a line of Arabic poetry.[4]

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) is among the Sunni scholars who interpreted mawlā as meaning supporter (*nāṣir*), friend, and companion (*al-muʿāshir*).[5] He also defined walī as loving, supporting, and close (*al-qarīb*).[6] Al-Rāzī consistently upheld this view across his works, citing various Quranic verses in support.[7]

Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) interpreted walī in the verse of wilāya as meaning support (*al-muwālāt*), a duty all Muslims owe to one another, including ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a). Citing Quranic verses, he elaborated on this meaning while rejecting any connection between the term and concepts of authority or priority in governance. He further distinguished between walāya and wilāya, attributing the latter exclusively to leadership and governance, noting that only walāya appears in the Quran.[8] Regarding the Hadith of Ghadīr and the term mawlā, Ibn Taymiyya reiterated his views, asserting that, if the hadith is authentic, its purpose was to affirm ʿAlī's faith, not to designate him as the Prophet's successor.[9]

In general, the argumentative approach of Sunni scholars regarding the meaning of walī/mawlā is based on their understanding of how these terms are used in Quranic verses and hadiths. This method is evident in the works of al-ʾIjī (d. 756/1355),[10] al-

1. See Ibid., 20: 144-58.
2. See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*,473.
3. See Abū Nuʿaym, *al-Imāma*, 217-20.
4. See Shīrāzī, *al-Ishāra*, 398.
5. Daghīm, Muṣṭalaḥāt al-imām al-Fakhr al-Rāzī, 801.
6. Ibid., 874.
7. See Rāzī, *al-Arbaʿīn*, 2: 298-300; Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 29: 459-60; Rāzī, *Sharḥu asmāʾ*, 296-99.
8. Ibn Taymiyya, *Mihāj al-sunnaʿ*, 7: 27-29.
9. Ibid., 7: 322-25.
10. ʾIjī, *K. al-Mawāqif*, 3: 615-17.

Taftāzānī (d. 793/1390),[1] and Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 974/1576).[2] While some of these works make occasional references to the lexical meanings of walī/mawlā according to Arab lexicographers, such references do not play a central role in their arguments or discussions.

Meaning of "Walī/Mawlā" in Shiite Sources

As previously mentioned, given the hadiths found in Shiite hadith sources, it can be said that questions regarding the meaning of walī/mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr began to arise during the imamate of Imam al-Sajjād (a). According to a hadith, a companion of Imam al-Sajjād (a) asked him about the Prophet's statement in the phrase "Whoever I am his mawlā, ʿAlī (a) is his mawlā" from the Hadith of Ghadīr. In response, the Imam (a) stated: "[The Prophet (s)] informed them that he [i.e., ʿAlī (a)] is the Imam after him."[3]

These questions were repeated during the imamate of other Imams as well. In a hadith, Imam al-Bāqir (a) explained that the Hadith of Ghadīr was intended by the Prophet (s) to declare the imamate and leadership of Imam ʿAlī (a).[4] In another hadith, when Abān b. Taghlib (d. 141/758) asked Imam al-Bāqir (a) about the phrase "Whoever I am his mawlā," the Imam (a) replied: "O Abū Saʿīd, are you asking about such a matter? [The Prophet (s)] clarified for them that he [i.e., ʿAlī (a)] would stand among them in place of [the Messenger of God and as his successor]."[5]

In a hadith from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), he explained that the Prophet's purpose in delivering the Sermon of Ghadīr was to declare the succession and designation of Imam ʿAlī (a) after the Prophet (s).[6] In another hadith regarding the Hadith of Ghadīr, he pointed out that referring to ʿAlī (a) as mawlā and pledging allegiance to him signifies his wilāya over everyone.[7] In response to a question about the greatest day for Muslims, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) emphasized the significance of the Day of Ghadīr, stating that the Prophet (s), through the phrase "Whoever I am his mawlā, this ʿAlī (a) is his mawlā", appointed Imam ʿAlī (a) as his successor.[8] As is evident from the content of the

1. Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 2: 289-90.
2. Haytamī, *al-Ṣawāʿiq al-muḥtiqa*, 1: 104-14.
3. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 123; Ṣadūq, *Maʿānī l-akhbār*, 65.
4. See Ṣaffār *Baṣāʾir*, 77-78.
5. Ṣadūq, *Maʿānī l-akhbār*, 66.
6. See Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 293-94.
7. See Ibid., 1: 420.
8. See Ibid., 4: 149.

aforementioned hadiths, they elucidate the meaning of mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr and its indication of Imamate and succession.

According to another hadith, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), in response to a question about the Prophet's intent in the Hadith of Ghadīr and the use of the term mawlā, referred to a statement of the Prophet (s) and said: "By God, they asked the Messenger of God (a) about this, and he replied: 'God is my mawlā and has greater priority over me than I have over myself, and I, in His presence, have no authority. Likewise, I am the mawlā of the believers and have greater priority over them than they have over themselves, and in my presence, they have no authority. Whoever I am his mawlā and have greater priority over him than he has over himself, then ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) is his mawlā and has greater priority over him than he has over himself, [while] having no authority.'"[1] In this hadith, the meaning of mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr is equated with the concept of "*ṣāḥib al-amr*" (master of affairs) and guardian. The Prophetic hadith cited by Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) has also been transmitted with similar wording in Sunni historical and hadith sources.[2]

Imami theologians have also elaborated on the meaning of walī/mawlā in their works, providing various arguments. Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991), after citing the hadiths of the Imams (a) explaining the meaning of mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr, devoted a section to addressing the objections raised by Sunni theologians regarding the interpretation of this term. While acknowledging the multiple meanings of mawlā—such as liberator, freed person, and other connotations—he, based on contextual clues within the Ghadīr Sermon and linguistic evidence that clarifies the primary meaning of the word, defined it as ṣāḥib al-amr (master of affairs). Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's principal argument rests on emphasizing the various connotations of the term and the sense derived from its usage among Arabs.[3]

Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022) authored two treatises on the meaning of mawlā, titled *Aqṣām al-mawlā fī l-lisān*[4] and *Risāla fī maʿnā al-mawlā*.[5] In the first treatise, he notes that the term mawlā in linguistic usage is divided into ten categories, eight of which

1. Ṭabarī al-Āmulī, *Bishārat al-Muṣṭafā*, 51.

2. In one of the variant versions of the hadiths related to the event of Ghadīr Khumm, the phrase "God is my mawlā, and I am also the mawlā of the believers" is attributed to the Prophet (a). These hadiths have been transmitted in various sources through the companions of Prophet (s) al-Barrāʾ b. ʿĀzib, Ḥudhayfa b. Usayd, and Zayd b. al-Arqam (in historical sources, see Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 110-11; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 219-20; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 5: 209, 7: 348-49; in Hadith sources, see Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Sunna*, 2: 644; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 310, 437; Ājurī, *al-Sharīʿa*, 4: 2049-50).

3. See Ṣadūq, *Maʿānī l-akhbār*, 65-74.

4. The categories of mawlā in [Arabic] language.

5. A treatise on the meaning of mawlā.

are valid and commonly applied. He highlights certain contextual clues to align the meaning of this term in the Hadith of Ghadīr with the concept of Imamate. As a first step, he interprets the meaning employed in the hadith by referencing internal textual evidence, particularly the phrase "Am I not more entitled to you than you are to yourselves? (*A-lastu awlā bikum min anfusikum*)". Al-Mufīd argues that, based on the content of the Hadith of Ghadīr, among the eight valid meanings of walī, only the sense of "one who must be obeyed" to Imam ʿAlī (a)—which signifies his Imamate and succession—applies here. He further supports his interpretation by citing a poem composed by Ḥassān b. Thābit (d. 54/674) following the event of Ghadīr, in which the term mawlā is used to denote Imamate and the obligation to obey Imam ʿAlī (a). Among al-Mufīd's literary arguments in this treatise is his reference to the poetry of al-Akhṭal (d. 92/708)[1] and al-Kumayt b. Zayd (d. 126/743),[2] Arab poets and literary figures who used the term mawlā in their verses to convey the meaning of Imamate and understood it to imply obligatory obedience.[3]

In *Risāla fī maʿnā al-mawlā*, al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, in addition to citing the text of the Hadith of Ghadīr and the aforementioned poetry, also draws upon the statements of other Muslim scholars and lexicographers. Citing the explanation of mawlā provided by Maʿmar b. al-Muthannā (d. 208/823)[4] regarding its meaning in verse 15 of Surah al-Ḥadīd (57),[5] he interprets the term as "one who has priority over you (*awlā bikum*)." This treatise also includes historical context related to the events following the Sermon of Ghadīr, such as the Prophet's instruction for people to greet ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) as "*Amīr al-Muʾminīn* (*a*) (Commander of the Faithful)."[6] In another of al-Mufīd's works, he recounts a debate with a Muʿtazilite scholar concerning the meaning of mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr. In this debate, he references the poetry of al-Akhṭal and the views of other Muʿtazilite scholars to argue that the term signifies Imamate and leadership (*imāra*).[7]

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1. Ghiyāth b. Ghawth al-Taghlibī, known as al-Akhṭal, was a Christian Arab poet. He is regarded as one of the most knowledgeable individuals in the Arabic language (Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shiʿr wa l-shuʿarāʾ*, 1: 473).

2. Al-Kumayt b. Zayd al-Asadī was a renowned poet from Kufa. He is described as knowledgeable in Arabic literature and language, as well as in the genealogies and histories of the Arabs (Marzbānī, *Muʿjam al-shuʿarāʾ*, 285).

3. See Mufīd, *Aqsām al-Mawlā*.

4. Maʿmar b. al-Muthannā al-Tamīmī was an Arab scholar renowned for his expertise in Arabic literature, earning him the title "*al-Naḥwī al-ʿAllāma* (the erudite grammarian)." He is regarded as one of the most knowledgeable individuals across various fields of study (Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 13: 252).

5. Maʿmar b. al-Muthannā, *Majāz al-Qurʾān*, 2: 254. It is noted this treatise mentions Maʿmar b. al-Muthannā's book, *Gharīb al-Qurʾān*, although it is no longer extant.

6. See Mufīd, *Risālatʰⁿ fī mauna l-Mawlā*.

7. Mufīd, *al-Fuṣūl al-mukhtāra*, 22-23.

In *al-Masāʾil al-ʿUkbariyya*, al-Shaykh al-Mufīd discusses the meaning of the term walī in verse 55 of Surah al-Māʾida (5). While he acknowledges that love (*maḥabba*) and affection (*mawadda*) are among the possible meanings of this term, he argues that, given the context of the verse, it is impossible to interpret walī as referring to these meanings. He argued that because the word "*innamā*" (meaning 'only' or 'verily') is used in the verse al-Wilaya, the verse indicates the confinement and exclusivity of Wilaya (guardianship, authority) to God, the Prophet (s), and the *ulī al-amr* (those in authority). Its implication is that the only *Walī* (guardian, authoritative figure) for the people is God, the Messenger of God (s), and the *ulī al-amr*. Therefore, if the meaning of *walī* here were merely friendship and love (*mawadda*), this exclusivity would be incorrect, as in verse 71 of Surah al-Tawba (9): "But the faithful, men and women, are comrades of one another (*Awliyāʾ*)," where all believers are considered friends of one another. Consequently, given that this verse was revealed in honor of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) and that exclusivity is employed within it, a position different from the obligation of love/affection must have been bestowed upon Imam ʿAlī (a). That rank, introduced by the Prophet's designation of him as *Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, is Imamate and leadership.[1] Elsewhere, al-Shaykh al-Mufīd briefly emphasizes that the meaning of walī in this verse is equivalent to wilāya (guardianship), asserting that obedience to Imam ʿAlī (a) is obligatory.[2]

In *al-Shāfī fī l-Imāma*, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā addresses objections raised by al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, a Muʿtazilī scholar, regarding the meaning of walī in verse 55 of Surah al-Māʾida (5) and mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr. He examines the meanings of these two terms in detail. In his explanation of walī in the aforementioned verse, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā points out that it means "guardian" (*qayyim*) and signifies "ruler" (*sulṭān*) among the Arabs, and thus, it conveys the meaning of "one who holds authority" (*mālik al-amr*). In his argument, he references a poem by al-Kumayt in which walī is used to mean "ruler" and "authority." As evidence for his account, he also cites statement by Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Mubarrad (d. 286/899) to the effect that the core meanings of walī and mawlā are "one with priority" (*awlā*) and "one with a rightful claim" (*aḥaqq*).[3] Additionally, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, in responding further to the objections raised by al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, points to certain textual clues from the sermon of Ghadīr and historical evidence

1. Mufīd, *al-Masāʾil al-ʿUkbariyya*, 50.

2. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 7.

3. See Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Shāfī fī al-Imāma*, 2: 217-18. Here, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā references a book titled *al-ʿIbāra* by al-Mubarrad, which is no longer extant. However, in another work by al-Mubarrad, one can find a discussion on the meaning of "mawlā" similar to what al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā has cited (Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil*, 4: 39).

for the interpretation that Imam ʿAlī's leadership is necessary and his obedience is obligatory.[1]

In the same book, in response to al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār's objection regarding the meaning of the term mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā examines the meaning of this term. Like al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, he demonstrates the use of walī to mean "one with priority (*awlā*)" by citing lexicographers and referencing the poetry of Arab poets. Furthermore, in addition to reiterating his frequent citation of al-Mubarrad, he cites the views of lexicographers such as al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/822) and Ibn al-Anbārī (d. 328/940).[2] Moreover, he directs his attention to internal textual clues within the Sermon of Ghadīr, arguing from earlier passages, such as the statement, "Am I not more entitled to you than you are to yourselves?" that the term mawlā signifies one with priority over others. To confirm the validity of this interpretation, he points to instances of the use of various phrases involving mawlā in Arabic where the intended meaning aligns with one with priority and entitlement.[3]

Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, in his work *al-Dhakhīrah fī ʿilm al-Kalām*, reiterates part of what he had previously presented in *al-Shāfī* regarding the intended meaning of the term walī in the Verse of *Wilāya*.[4] Similarly, in a treatise titled *Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda al-mudhahhaba*, dedicated to explaining a poem by al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī (d. 173/789), he argues for the meaning of the term mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr. Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā recounts what occurred at Ghadīr Khumm and, by referencing the poem of Ḥassān b. Thābit on the event, summarizes the arguments he had previously outlined in *al-Shāfī*.[5]

Abū l-Ṣalāḥ al-Ḥalabī (d. 447/1055) is another Shiite theologian who discussed the meaning of "walī/mawlā" in the Verse of Wilāya and the Hadith of Ghadīr. Al-Ḥalabī, while acknowledging the existence of other meanings for the term mawlā, and referring to various usages of this word in lexicographical and juridical sources—such as guardian of blood rights (*walī al-dam*) and guardian of a woman (*walī al-marʾa*)—established its application in the sense of "authority" and "one in charge." Furthermore, considering the text of the Verse of Wilāya,[6] since the audience includes all people, including believers, unbelievers, the righteous, and sinners, if the meanings "beloved" or "helper" were

1. See Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Shāfī fī al-Imāma*, 2: 290-91.

2. Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān*, 46; Ibn al-Anbārī, *al-Aḍdād*, 2: 161. Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā cited the book *al-Mushkil*, authored by Ibn al-Anbārī, which is no longer extant.

3. See Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Shāfī fī al-Imāma*, 2: 268-77.

4. See Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Dhakhīra*, 438-39.

5. See Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, "Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda al-mudhahhaba," 130-33.

6. "Your guardian (*waliyyukum*) is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful."

correct, Muslims would, by virtue of this verse, be obliged to love and assist unbelievers, which is contradicted by numerous other verses that explicitly prohibit this.[1]

Al-Ḥalabī, in another context while discussing the meaning of the term mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr, presented arguments to determine its intended meaning. In the first stage, by considering the usage of mawlā in verses such as verse 15 of Surah al-Ḥadīd (57)[2] and verse 33 of Surah al-Nisāʾ (4),[3] he demonstrated that the term refers to the concept of "having priority" (*awlā*). Accordingly, the primary meaning of walī is "having priority," with other meanings such as "beloved" and "helper" deriving from and being interpreted in light of this concept. Furthermore, the internal textual evidence within the Sermon of Ghadīr supports this interpretation. Al-Ḥalabī goes on to argue that even if one were to disregard the internal and historical context of the Hadith of Ghadīr, given that the core meaning of mawlā is "having priority," the term in the sermon should be understood in this sense unless another context explicitly establishes a different meaning. However, such alternative evidence does not exist in the Hadith of Ghadīr.[4] It can be said that the emphasis on the primary and literal meaning of walī/mawlā was first articulated by Abū l-Ṣalāḥ al-Ḥalabī.

Abū l-Fatḥ al-Karājakī (d. 449/1057), in addressing the meaning of the term walī/mawlā in the Verse of Wilāya and the Hadith of Ghadīr, reiterated what al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā had stated in *al-Shāfī*.[5] Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) similarly echoed al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā's statement. This occurs at times in *Talkhīṣ al-Shāfī*, which is an abridgment of *al-Shāfī fī l-Imāma*,[6] and at other times in al-Ṭūsī's other theological[7] or exegetical[8] works.

Al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrisī (d. 548/1154), in his work, argued for the meaning of the term mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr. Emphasizing Arabic usage, he confirms the application of this term in the sense of "having priority." Elsewhere, while acknowledging the existence of multiple meanings for mawlā and considering the text of the Hadith of

1. See Ḥalabī, *Taqrīb al-maʿārif*, 184-85.
2. "The Fire will be your abode: it is your [ultimate] refuge (*mawlākum*)."
3. "For everyone We have appointed heirs (*mawālī*) to what the parents and near relatives leave."
4. Ḥalabī, *Taqrīb al-maʿārif*, 214-19.
5. Karājakī, *Kanz al-fawāʾid*, 1: 334-35, 2: 81-94.
6. Ṭūsī, *Talkhīṣ al-Shāfī*, 2: 10-21, 175-98.
7. Ṭūsī, *al-Iqtiṣād*, 319-20, 345-48; Ṭūsī, "al-Kitāb al-mufṣiḥ fī Imāmati Amīr al-Muʾminīn wa al-Aʾimma (a)," 129-30, 134-36.
8. Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān*, 3: 559-60.

Ghadīr, he rejected all interpretations except for "having priority," which implies leadership and imamate.[1]

Ibn Biṭrīq (d. 600/1204) discussed the Hadith of Ghadīr and the meaning of mawlā. He categorized its meanings into ten facets, interpreting all of them as falling within the semantic scope of "having priority" and referring back to it. Ibn Biṭrīq also supported this interpretation by presenting examples from Arabic poetry, Quranic exegesis, and Prophetic hadiths, equating the understood meaning of mawlā with "having priority." He demonstrated how the other cited meanings of mawlā revert to the core concept of "having priority." Furthermore, he referred to additional internal textual evidence from the Hadith of Ghadīr, arguing against the validity of alternative meanings. He also cited various versions of the Sermon of Ghadīr as further evidence for affirming "having priority" as the correct interpretation of mawlā.[2] Although Abū l-Ṣalāḥ al-Ḥalabī had earlier identified "having priority" as the primary and literal meaning of mawlā, the key contribution of Ibn Biṭrīq lies in formulating this concept as a comprehensive theory and demonstrating how all other derived meanings of the term revert to its primary sense.

Sadīd al-Dīn al-Ḥimmiṣī al-Rāzī (d. 600/1204), in his work, elaborated on the meaning of walī/mawlā in the Verse of Wilāya and the Hadith of Ghadīr. Following an approach similar to that of al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā in *al-Shāfī*, he argued that the term walī in verse 55 of Surah al-Mā'ida (5) is synonymous with "one vested with authority" and "deserving of obedience."[3] A similar alignment with al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā's reasoning is evident in al-Ḥimmiṣī's interpretation of mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr as well. He cited Arab poets and lexicographers to support his argument, asserting—based on internal textual and conceptual evidence from the Sermon of Ghadīr—that alternative meanings of mawlā in this context are incorrect. Additionally, al-Ḥimmiṣī addressed certain objections raised against the abovementioned arguments.[4]

Al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī (d. 676/1277), in his work *al-Maslak fī uṣūl al-dīn*, addressed the meaning of walī/mawlā. In a very concise discussion, considering that only two meanings—"having priority" and "providing support (*al-nuṣra*)"—are relevant to walī/mawlā, he deemed "having priority" as the correct interpretation for both terms. Al-Ḥillī, considering other Quranic verses as well as the historical and conceptual evidence

1. Ṭabrisī, *I'lām al-warā*, 165-67.
2. Ibn Biṭrīq, *'Umdatu 'uyūn*, 112-19.
3. Ḥimmiṣī al-Rāzī, *al-Munqidh*, 2: 301-3.
4. Ibid., 2: 335-48.

of the Hadith of Ghadīr, rejected the interpretation of walī/mawlā as "providing support" in this context.[1]

Ibn Maytham al-Baḥrānī (d. 679/1280), in his work, presented a detailed discussion on the meaning of walī/mawlā, likely influenced by the statements of Abū l-Ṣalāḥ al-Ḥalabī and Ibn Biṭrīq. Regarding the lexical meaning of walī in the Verse of Wilāya, and based on the statements of lexicologists, he concluded that its sole meaning is "having priority." As for the conventional usage of the term, he identified two possible meanings: "having priority" and "providing support." Ibn Maytham further notes that the wilāya mentioned in the verse, unlike the meaning of "providing support," does not indicate a general or universal concept. Given that if the intended meaning had been "providing support," such advice is already explicitly mentioned in another verse (Q 9:71),[2] repeating it here would be meaningless. Therefore, the meaning of "providing assistance" must be rejected, and the meaning of "having priority" for walī in the verse of wilāya is established—a meaning conceptually connected to Imamate.[3]

Ibn Maytham also examined the meaning of mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr, employing an approach similar to that of al-Shaykh al-Mufīd. Drawing on the Quranic usage of this term, as well as its appearance in Arabic poetry and literature, and inspired by the reasoning of al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, he sought to identify the intended meaning of walī. In addition to referencing al-Mubarrad's view, he cited other lexicologists who equated walī and mawlā with "having priority." In the next stage, based on internal textual evidence from the Sermon of Ghadīr, Ibn Maytham determined that "having priority" is the intended meaning of mawlā. He then enumerated the various meanings of this term and, in light of the content of the sermon, rejected them all as incorrect, affirming "having priority" as the primary and true meaning of mawlā. Moreover, he argued that even if one does not accept "having priority" as the primary meaning of mawlā, the internal textual evidence of the Hadith of Ghadīr, along with the historical context of the event, still makes this interpretation—which in turn implies imamate—the only viable sense of the term in this context.[4]

1. Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī, *al-Maslak fī uṣūl*, 248-51.

2. "But the faithful, men and women, are comrades (*awliyāʾ*) of one another."

3. Ibn Maytham al-Baḥrānī, *al-Najāt*, 94-96. The point about the meaninglessness of this concept's repetition in the Verse of Wilāya is derived from the use of the term "*innamā*," which serves to convey exclusivity and specificity. This is because, in verse 71 of Surah al-Tawba (9), the word "*awliyā'*" is used without any indication of exclusivity or a distinctive characteristic.

4. Ibid., 109-15.

Al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325), in his commentary on *al-Yāqūt* by Ibrāhīm b. Nawbakht (d. 4th/10th century),[1] examines the meaning of walī/mawlā. Regarding the meaning of the term mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr, he first notes that, according to lexicographers, the term is used to mean "one with priority." He also references certain Quranic verses where the term mawlā is employed in this sense. Furthermore, to determine the meaning of mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr, he relies on internal textual evidence within the hadith and historical circumstances related to it.[2]

Regarding the meaning of walī in the Verse of Wilāya, although Ibn Nawbakht does not address this issue in his book,[3] al-Ḥillī discusses it in his commentary. Referring to the opinions of lexicographers, he interprets walī in this verse as synonymous with "one with priority" and "one with the right of authority," supporting this interpretation with examples from Arabic usage. He also argues that understanding walī to mean "affection" is incorrect in this context, as this meaning is general and is mentioned in other verses (e.g., Q 9:71). He asserts that the verse in question was revealed to convey a specific and distinct meaning.[4]

In *Kashf al-murād*, he offers a similar argument to the one previously mentioned in explaining the meaning of walī/mawlā in the Verse of *al-Wilāya* and the Hadith of Ghadīr.[5] Additionally, in his other work, *Manāhij al-yaqīn*, he briefly addresses the meaning of walī in the Verse of Wilāya, equating it with the concept of "one with priority in authority."[6]

Fāḍil Miqdād al-Sayūrī (d. 826/1423), in addressing the meaning of walī/mawlā, presents arguments similar to those advanced by al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā. He asserts that walī in the Verse of Wilāya, based on Arabic usage, can only mean "one with priority in authority," citing the views of Arab lexicographers and men of literature as evidence.[7] Regarding the term mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr, he follows al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā's reasoning, referencing Arabic poetry and the opinions of lexicographers, concluding that this term can only be interpreted as "one with priority in authority." Drawing on various

1. Hassan Ansari, based on the text and its style, does not attribute the authorship of this book to Ibrāhīm b. Nawbakht and instead dates its composition to the 7th/13th century (see Ansari, "ʿAllāma Qazwīnī wa Kitāb al-Yāqūt-i Ibn Nawbakht").
2. Ḥillī, *Anwār al-malakūt*, 220-21.
3. See Ibrāhīm b. Nawbakht, *al-Yāqūt*, 83.
4. Ḥillī, *Anwār al-malakūt*, 225-26.
5. Ḥillī, *Kashf al-murād*, 368-69.
6. Ḥillī, *Manāhij al-yaqīn*, 472-73.
7. Sayūrī, *Irshād al-ṭālibīn*, 341-44.

textual and conceptual clues within the Sermon of Ghadīr, he dismisses other possible meanings for the term mawlā in this context.[1] In another of his works, al-Sayūrī briefly reiterates these same arguments concerning the meaning of walī/mawlā.[2]

Al-Rāzī al-Ḥablarūdī (d. after 839/1436), in his work written in response to objections raised by a Sunni scholar criticizing Imami beliefs, addresses the meaning of walī/mawlā. Regarding the meaning of walī in the Verse of Wilāya, he provides a concise explanation, emphasizing the opinion of certain lexicographers and identifying the primary and literal meaning of the term as "one with priority in authority" and "one with the right of authority."[3] Elsewhere in the same work, when discussing the meaning of mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr, he relies more on internal textual evidence from this hadith and historical events related to it as recorded in Sunni hadith and historical sources, rather than on lexicographical opinions. He also highlights the use of mawlā in verse 15 of Surah al-Ḥadīd (57), interpreting it as "one with priority."[4]

Al-Qāḍī Nūr Allāh al-Tustarī (d. 1019/1610), in a work he authored to refute objections raised by al-Haytamī, briefly addresses the meaning of walī/mawlā. He first succinctly restricts the meaning of walī to "one with priority in authority," arguing that, based on the textual clues within the Verse of Wilāya, other proposed meanings for the term are incorrect.[5] Elsewhere, in his discussion of the meaning of mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr, he briefly notes the prevalence of the meaning "one with priority in authority" in Arabic usage. He then focuses on the internal textual evidence of the Sermon of Ghadīr to demonstrate the inapplicability of the other meaning of mawlā in this hadith.[6]

Al-ʿAllāma al-Majlisī (d. 1111/1699), in his work *Ḥaqq al-Yaqīn*, discusses the meaning of "walī/mawlā." Regarding the meaning of walī in the Verse of Wilāya, he briefly examines the various meanings of the term and, based on textual clues within the verse and the generality of the meaning "helper," which is mentioned in other verses, concludes that only the meaning "one with priority in authority" is correct here.[7] As for the meaning of mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr, he considers the various definitions found in Arabic lexicons and, drawing on Quranic evidence and internal textual evidence from

1. Ibid., 348-49.
2. See Sayūrī, *al-Lawāmiʿ al-ʾilāyiyya*, 337-39.
3. Rāzī al-Ḥablarūdī, *al-Tawḍīḥ al-anwar*, 50.
4. See Ibid., 137-40.
5. Yustarī, *al-Ṣawārim al-muhriqa*, 173-74.
6. See Ibid., 182-84.
7. Majlisī, *Ḥaq al-yaqīn*, 50-52.

the Sermon of Ghadīr, determines that only the meaning "one with priority in authority" is applicable.[1]

Mīr Ḥāmid Ḥusayn al-Hindī (d. 1306/1888), in his work, provides a detailed argument for the meaning of mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr as denoting "one with priority." He begins by listing 42 Sunni scholars, spanning from the mid-2nd/8th century to 14th/20th century, who interpreted mawlā in this sense.[2] He then presents 30 arguments supporting this interpretation. These include internal textual evidence from the Sermon of Ghadīr, various versions of the sermon recorded in Sunni sources, historical contexts related to the event of Ghadīr Khumm—such as the revelation of the Verse of Completion (*ikmāl*) (Q 5:3) and the opening verse of Surah al-Maʿārij (70)—and poetry by Ḥassān b. Thābit and Qays b. Saʿd (d. 60/680) about the event. He also highlights ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's congratulatory remarks to Imam ʿAlī (a) following the sermon and Prophetic hadiths that use the term mawlā. These points form the basis of Mīr Ḥāmid Ḥusayn's reasoning.[3]

ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī (d. 1970), in his book *al-Ghadīr*, provides an extensive analysis of the meaning of mawlā. Focusing on the usage of this term in verse 15 of Surah al-Ḥadīd (75), he lists 42 Sunni exegetes who have interpreted mawlā in this verse to mean "one with priority."[4] He then, referencing al-Farrāʾ and Ibn al-Anbārī,[5] who equate the meanings of walī and mawlā, catalogs the 27 meanings of mawlā as identified by lexicographers. Al-Amīnī demonstrates that, considering the context of the Hadith of Ghadīr and its lexical and historical clues, none of these meanings are applicable except for "one with priority (*awlā*)," "guardian (*walī*)," and "master (*sayyid*)." Additionally, he examines the usage of mawlā in Quranic verses and Prophetic hadiths, substantiating how these meanings align with its various applications.[6]

Providing a lexical analysis of the term, al-Amīnī concludes that the primary meaning of mawlā is none other than "one who has priority in a matter (*awlā bi-shayʾ*)." This meaning serves as a comprehensive definition encompassing the other meanings attributed to it. As al-Amīnī notes, this insight is derived from the theory of Ibn Biṭrīq. However, al-Amīnī's innovation lies in explaining how all the various meanings of mawlā can be traced back to the concept of "one who has priority." For example, "cousin," one

1. See Ibid., 110-15.
2. Mūsawī, *ʿAbaqāt al-anwār*, 8: 8-11.
3. See Mūsawī, *ʿAbaqāt al-anwār*, 9: 83-425, 10: 5-603.
4. Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 1: 615-21.
5. Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān*, 2: 161; Ibn al-Anbārī, *al-Aḍdād*, 46.
6. Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 1: 640-48.

of the meanings attributed to mawlā, is so understood because a cousin is "one who has priority" in uniting with and supporting their relative. Similarly, the meanings of "friend" and "supporter" are equated with mawlā insofar as they indicate "one who has priority" in defending a beloved or assisting someone who supports them. Al-Amīnī reduces all 26 meanings of mawlā identified by lexicographers to this core notion of "one who has priority."[1]

Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā Jaʿfarī (d. 2010), in a section of his book dedicated to examining the meanings of imam and walī in Islamic heritage, delves into the meaning of walī. In this section, he adopts the reasoning approach of Ibn Biṭrīq and al-Amīnī in elucidating the meaning of mawlā to explain walī. He notes that walī is a verbal noun derived from the root *w-l-y* and that the term mawlā is also derived from this root. Consequently, he confines his analysis to clarifying the meaning of this root, deeming it sufficient to refine the understanding of all words derived from it.[2]

ʿAllāma Jaʿfarī first examines the meaning of walī in various lexicons, ultimately noting that the root *w-l-y* has only one literal meaning: "the possessor of authority over something or someone," expressed as "one who has the right to exercise authority." He then, like ʿAllāma al-Amīnī, explores how the multiple meanings attributed to walī revert to this literal sense. The primary difference between Jaʿfarī's method and that of al-Amīnī is that while al-Amīnī addressed the return of the various meanings of mawlā to "one who has priority" through specific examples, Jaʿfarī approaches the issue methodologically by establishing general rules. In articulating his conclusion, ʿAllāma Jaʿfarī outlines four stages: (1) the diversity and multiplicity in the instances of walāya, (2) the implications and external requirements of wilāya, (3) the common error among lexicographers in conflating the concepts and instances of a word, and (4) the contextual clues and usages that indicate the literal meaning of walī.

In the first stage, to explain the multiplicity of instances of wilāya, three aspects are examined. Firstly, the one who possesses wilāya: ʿAllāma Jaʿfarī explains the difference between the two by noting that walī is *ṣifa mushabbaha* (adjectival form denoting permanence) rather than an agent noun (*ism al-fāʿil*).[3] The main distinction lies in the permanence (*thubūt*) implied by *ṣifa mushabbaha*, unlike *ism al-fāʿil*, which denotes a

1. Ibid., 1: 649-51

2. See Jaʿfarī, *Buḥūth ḥaw al-Imāma; fī maʿna al-Imām wa al-Walī*, 55-93.

3. An *ism al-fāʿil* is an active participle derived from a verb that conveys the sense of occurrence (*ḥudūth*). A *al-ṣifa al-mushabbaha*, on the other hand, is a noun derived from an intransitive verb, denoting permanence (*thubūt*) and inherently implying the consistent performance of the action from which it is derived (Ibn al-Ḥājib, *al-Kifāya*, 40-41).

temporary state. For instance, referring to someone as wālī (an *ism al-fāʿil*) is only correct if they actively hold wilāya (authority). In contrast, someone described as walī (a *ṣifa mushabbaha*) retains this designation permanently, even if they are practically devoid of authority. Secondly, the one over whom wilāya is exercised: Based on Arabic usage, only rational beings can be subject to wilāya. Thus, Arabs never use phrases like *walī al-anʿām* (guardian of livestock). Thirdly, the scope of wilāya: This refers to the domains in which the walī possesses authority and has priority in authority. With these three aspects in mind, the instances of walī can vary based on the person possessing wilāya, those under wilāya, and the scope of wilāya. Consequently, "authority over public affairs" is one instance of wilāya, not its meaning.

In the second stage, while explaining the implications and requirements of wilāya, it is noted that various meanings, such as "love" and "assistance," are among the necessary implications of the term walī. This is because those who hold authority typically care for those under their governance and strive to assist them. The same applies to other meanings associated with walī. Therefore, when defining the meaning of this term, one must always ensure not to confuse the meaning itself with the implications and requirements of the word.

In the third stage, the common issue is explained that in lexical sources, the instances and implications of a term are often provided instead of its precise and synonymous meaning. This is because the purpose of compiling dictionaries is to guide readers toward the primary meaning of a word rather than to present its exact definition. For this reason, the multiple meanings listed for walī or mawlā in dictionaries are, in fact, various concepts, including its instances and implications.

In the final stage, in an examination of contextual clues and usages in determining the literal meaning of walī, it is noted that if we analyze the various derivatives of *w-l-y* in the Quran—amounting to over 100 instances—we find that, considering the diverse lexical and conceptual contexts within the verses, all these usages can be traced back to the primary meaning of walī.[1] The significant point in this discussion is that if we lack knowledge of a term's true meaning and encounter it applied across various concepts

1. One instance that might be considered an exception to this theory is verse 34 of Surah Fuṣṣilat (41): "Good and evil [conduct] are not equal. Repel [evil] with what is best. [If you do so,] he between whom and you was enmity, will then be as though he were a sympathetic friend (*waliyyun ḥamīm*)." In this verse, walī is clearly used in the sense of "friend." The point here, as ʿAllāma Jaʿfarī highlights, is that "friend" is one of the instances of the term walī. Additionally, as ʿAllāma al-Amīnī has noted (Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 1: 650), a "friend" holds "priority" in fulfilling the rights of another friend, which is why walī is used in this context. In reality, what leads to the concept of "friend" being associated with walī in this verse is the attribute of being "close-hearted (*ḥamīm*)" that accompanies it.

and instances, we might mistakenly consider these other meanings as its definitions, claiming that the term has multiple meanings. However, in the case of words derived from the root *w-l-y*, it is possible to identify a single, genuine primary meaning and understand the rationale for its application across different concepts.

Based on these discussions, Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā Jaʿfarī asserts that the root *w-l-y* has only one primary and genuine meaning: "the possessor of authority over a thing or person," which is expressed as "having priority in authority." To justify the validity of this conclusion, he presents arguments and evidence. ʿAllāma Jaʿfarī, by analyzing the usages of walī in Quranic verses, demonstrates the inaccuracy of interpreting it as "*nāṣir*" (helper) in certain contexts, highlighting the distinction between these two concepts. Furthermore, he points out that if the term walī indeed carried multiple meanings, contextual clues would need to be provided in the Quran to clarify its intended meaning, as is the case with the word "*ʿayn*," which has various meanings such as "eye" and "spring." Considering this point, along with the fact that walī is often used in the Quran without any contextual clues, he concludes that walī possesses only one literal meaning.[1]

Given the above points, two key differences can be highlighted between the discussions of Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā Jaʿfarī and those of Ibn Biṭrīq and ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī. The first difference pertains to the issue in question. The late Jaʿfarī focused on the meaning of the root *w-l-y*, asserting that clarifying its meaning also elucidates the meanings of all its derivatives. In contrast, Ibn Biṭrīq and ʿAllāma al-Amīnī confined their discussions to explaining the literal meaning of mawlā. The second difference lies in their method of reasoning. ʿAllāma Jaʿfarī employed general principles and relied on Quranic usages to elucidate the meaning of the root *w-l-y*. Conversely, ʿAllāma al-Amīnī based his arguments primarily on the statements of lexicographers. While al-Amīnī also referenced Quranic verses and Prophetic hadiths in his reasoning, these references did not play a central role in his argumentative approach.

Ayatollah Sobḥānī, in an explanation similar to that of ʿAllāma al-Amīnī, examined the lexical meaning of the term mawlā. Like ʿAllāma al-Amīnī, he analyzed the meaning of this term in Surah al-Ḥadīd (57:15) based on the interpretations of Sunni exegetes, demonstrating their acknowledgment of the meaning as "one with priority." He concluded that the term mawlā has only one meaning and, referencing Ibn Biṭrīq's contribution, explained how other meanings of this term revert to the concept of "one with priority." Ayatollah Sobḥānī further cited additional internal textual evidence from

1. As previously mentioned, in verse 34 of Surah Fuṣṣilat (41), since the term walī is used in a meaning other than its primary one, an accompanying contextual clue has been provided.

the Hadith of Ghadīr and historical indicators related to the event of Ghadīr Khumm to substantiate his argument regarding the meaning of the term.[1]

Conclusion

Considering the development of Imami theologians' arguments in defining the meaning of walī/mawlā as "one with priority (*awlā*)," which implies "imamate" and "caliphate," two main approaches can be identified. The first approach, initiated by al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq and further developed by al-Shaykh al-Mufīd and al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, acknowledged the existence of multiple meanings for walī/mawlā. Recognizing that these terms have several parallel and equally valid meanings, Imami theologians sought instances of their usage in Arabic that specifically conveyed the sense of "one with priority." This approach began with al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, who cited the usage of mawlā in Arabic to demonstrate its meaning as "one with priority." Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd focused on the internal textual and conceptual evidence within the Sermon of Ghadīr to determine the meaning of this term. During this period, the discussions of Imami theologians primarily revolved around the meaning of mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr. However, after the publication of *al-Masā'il al-'Ukbariyya*, attention was also directed to the meaning of walī in the Verse of Wilāya, employing the same methodology and perspective to argue for the meaning of mawlā. Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd provided more detailed and precise examples in referencing lexicographers and Arab poets. Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, likely influenced by al-Mufīd, adopted the same method, offering more elaborate arguments to define the meaning of walī in the Verse of Wilāya and mawlā in the Hadith of Ghadīr. His reasoning continued to emphasize various combinations of mawlā in Arabic, internal textual evidence from the Sermon of Ghadīr, and references to lexicographers and Arab poets, which remained central to his approach.

After this period, most Imami theologians, influenced by these methods and accepting the premise of multiple meanings for walī/mawlā, engaged in arguments to determine the intended meaning of these terms in the Verse of Wilāya and the Hadith of Ghadīr. The distinguishing feature of their work, relative to one another, lies in the level of detail and conciseness of their arguments. For instance, Mīr Ḥāmid Ḥusayn al-Hindī, in one of the most comprehensive collections of arguments, presented 30 reasons, clues, and proofs aligning the meaning of mawlā with the concept of "one with priority."

Another approach to reasoning about the meaning of walī/mawlā began with Abū l-Ṣalāḥ al-Ḥalabī in 5th/11th century and was developed into a formal theory by Ibn Baṭrīq

1. See Subḥānī, *al-Ilāhiyyāt*, 4: 88-99.

in the late 4th/12th century. According to this theory, the concept of "one with priority" is the sole primary and true meaning of the term mawlā. This concept serves as a unifying basis for other meanings cited by lexicographers, which, in turn, can all be traced back to this core meaning. In 7th/13th century, Ibn Maytham al-Baḥrānī briefly considered this theory, as did al-Rāzī al-Ḥablarūdī in 9th/15th century, and al-Qāḍī Nūr Allāh al-Tustarī in 10th/16th century. However, it did not play a central role in their arguments. Later, ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī emphasized this theory and demonstrated how the 26 meanings of mawlā could be traced back to the concept of "one with priority." Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā Jaʿfarī, building on this theory, explained the exclusivity of the root meaning of *w-l-y* as "one who possesses authority over a thing or a person," which is expressed as "one with priority" or "one with the right to authority."

The primary difference between these two approaches lies in that Imami theologians, influenced by al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, and al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, accepted that walī/mawlā has multiple meanings. They focused their efforts on demonstrating the possibility of its use in the sense of "one with priority." Subsequently, they sought to determine the intended meaning of mawlā in the context of the Sermon al-Ghadīr, based on internal textual clues or historical evidence related to the event. A similar process, with minor differences, was applied to explain the meaning of walī in the Verse of Wilāya. In contrast, according to Ibn Baṭrīq's theory, there is no need to consider internal textual or contextual evidence from the Sermon of Ghadīr or to refer to other verses when interpreting the Verse of Wilāya. This is because the exclusive meaning of mawlā or the root *w-l-y* as "one with priority"—implying comprehensive authority over those under one's guardianship—eliminates the necessity for evidence or reference to various usages of these terms in Arabic. Instead, the burden of proof shifts to those claiming that walī/mawlā is used in a sense other than "one with priority," requiring them to provide arguments and supporting evidence.

The focus of Imami theologians in presenting various arguments regarding the meaning of walī/mawlā—whether through lexical, literary, Quranic, or hadith-based evidence—was to establish that the Verse of Wilāya, revealed concerning ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), along with the Hadith of Ghadīr, constitutes one of the key textual proofs for affirming the Imamate, guardianship (*wilāya*), and succession of Imam ʿAlī (a). Given the meaning of "walī," the Verse of Wilāya is interpreted as follows: "Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down." Similarly, the phrase *man kuntu mawlāh* ("Whoever I am his mawlā") in the Hadith of Ghadīr is understood as: "Whoever I am his guardian, master of his affairs,

and one with priority over him, then ʿAlī (a) is his guardian, master of his affairs, and one with priority over him." These meanings and concepts point directly to the rightful Imamate, guardianship, and succession of Imam ʿAlī (a) after the Prophet (s).

Abū Ṭālib (a): Supporter of the Prophet (s)

Introduction

Abū Ṭālib (a), the father of Imam ʿAlī (a), the Commander of the Faithful, and the uncle of Prophet Muḥammad (s), was a pivotal figure in early Islamic history. After the death of his father, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, who was also the Prophet's grandfather, Abū Ṭālib (a) took on the responsibility of caring for the Prophet (s). He spared no effort in supporting the Prophet (s), Islam, and the Muslim community. As noted by Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd (d. 656/1258), without Abū Ṭālib (a), the expansion of Islam would have been severely hindered.[1] Although everyone acknowledges Abū Ṭālib's significance, as attested by history, some adversaries have cast doubt on his faith and questioned his conversion to Islam, despite it being an evident historical fact.

This article explores the life of the honorable Abū Ṭālib (a), both before and after the Prophetic mission, with the goal of presenting the most compelling evidence for his faith. By drawing on early historical sources, the article highlights Abū Ṭālib's unique status and life journey in supporting the Prophet (s)—a key aspect that Imāmī theologians have cited as strong evidence of his faith. Additionally, the article examines the origins of the doubts and skepticism surrounding Abū Ṭālib's faith, analyzing these claims through a historical lens.

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1. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 14: 83.

Abū Ṭālib's Life

There are discrepancies in historical sources regarding the name of Abū Ṭālib (a). Some sources identify his name as ʿAbd Manāf,[1] while others suggest that his teknonym, Abū Ṭālib (a), was indeed his name.[2] His father, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, was the son of Hāshim, and his mother, Fāṭima, was the daughter of ʿAmr al-Makhzūmī. Abū Ṭālib (a) was born approximately 35 years before the Prophet's birth, around the year 535.[3] He was the father of Imam ʿAlī (a), the first Shiite Imam, and the brother of ʿAbd Allāh b. Hāshim, the father of the Prophet (s).

Family and Social Status

Hāshim, Abū Ṭālib's grandfather and the great-grandfather of the Prophet (s), was a prominent figure in Mecca. He held the esteemed position of hosting and providing for the pilgrims of the Kaaba. During a year of famine in the Hijaz, Hāshim used his own wealth to supply bread and meat for the pilgrims, significantly enhancing his reputation. The title *Hāshim* is said to mean breaker, a reference to his actions during the famine when he personally broke loaves of bread to distribute to the pilgrims.[4] Probably after this period, Hāshim also took on the responsibility of supplying water to the Kaaba pilgrims, investing a substantial portion of his wealth in this endeavor. He established a commercial route between Yemen and the Levant (*al-Shām*) and facilitated trade between the Quraysh Arabs and Abyssinia, ensuring the safety of trade routes in the Hijaz.[5] Hāshim is credited with greatly enhancing the prestige and power of the Quraysh in the Hijaz, to the extent that during his lifetime, the Quraysh were free from fears of external invasions.[6]

After Hāshim's death, the responsibilities of providing food (*al-Rifāda*) and water (*al-Siqāya*) to the Kaaba pilgrims were passed on to his son al-Muṭṭalib b. Hāshim, and then to ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, Abū Ṭālib's father.[7] ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib was reportedly a monotheist. When the Zamzam well[8] was buried, it was ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib who rediscovered and

1. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Asāmī wa al-kunā*, 26.
2. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 109.
3. ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, 7: 196.
4. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 75; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 59.
5. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabwiyya*, 1: 135-6; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 78; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 1: 234.
6. See Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 1: 244.
7. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 57
8. The Zamzam well is one of the oldest and most significant water wells in Mecca, situated 21 meters east of the Kaaba, near the Safa and Marwa mountains. According to hadiths, it is the spring that miraculously flowed for

excavated it, using its pure water to serve the pilgrims of the Kaaba.[1] He was regarded as the leader and elder of the Quraysh tribe, and some sources even describe him as a ruler of the Quraysh.[2] His monotheistic beliefs are highlighted in the story of Abraha's attempted invasion of the Kaaba.[3]

Before his birth, the Prophet (s) had lost his father, ʿAbd Allāh. He was cared for by his grandfather, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, and his mother, Āmina (a). At the age of six, the Prophet (s) lost his mother and came entirely under the care of his grandfather. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib always honored and respected Muḥammad (s).[4] Given the way ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib treated him, it appears he was aware that Muḥammad (s) would be chosen as a Prophet (s). On one occasion, when the Prophet (s) was sitting in his grandfather's seat, others attempted to move him, but ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib intervened, saying, "Indeed, my son is a companion of angels."[5] There are other reports that also allude to this fact.[6]

Taking Custody of the Prophet (s)

When Muḥammad (s) was just eight years old, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib passed away, and Abū Ṭālib (a) assumed responsibility for his nephew.[7] On his deathbed, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib called his son Abū Ṭālib (a) and said, "My son, you know how much I love Muḥammad. Take care of him as best as you can." Abū Ṭālib (a) replied, "Father, you don't need to ask me to care for Muḥammad. He is my nephew and [as dear to me as] my own child."[8]

Ishmael by the grace of God. During the rule of the Jurhum tribe over Mecca, the Zamzam well was buried underground (Ibn Isḥāq, *K. al-Siyar wa l-maghāzī*, 23; Azraghī, *Akhbār Makka*, 2: 39-41).

1. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 103.

2. Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, 132.

3. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib went to meet Abraha to reclaim his camels, which had been seized by Abraha's army. Initially, Abraha assumed that ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib had come to plead for the protection of the Kaaba. However, upon realizing that he was only concerned with his camels, Abraha asked him, surprised, about the reason for this. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib replied, "I am the owner of the camels, and the Kaaba has its own Lord who will defend it if He wills." Following this, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib turned to prayer and supplication, asking God to protect the Sacred House from harm. When Abraha's forces approached the Kaaba, flocks of birds appeared, each carrying small stones in their beaks. The birds attacked the army, annihilating them completely.
This incident is referenced in the Quran: "[Did He not] send against them flocks of birds pelting them with stones of shale" (Q 105: 3-4) (Maqdisī, *al-Bad' wa l-tārīkh*, 3: 187).

4. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 168.

5. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 121; see also Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 448.

6. See Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā*, 1: 129-30.

7. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 179.

8. Kharkūshī, *Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā*, 1: 389.

Abū Ṭālib (a) inherited and surpassed the nobility and magnanimity of his father and grandfather. Known among the Quraysh as *al-Shaykh* (the master or senior),[1] he was responsible for providing food and water to the Kaaba pilgrims.[2] His presence commanded such awe and respect that no one could rival him in this task.[3] Historical reports note that Abū Ṭālib (a) was the only figure who, despite his poverty, remained the leader of the Quraysh.[4] Following the example of his father ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, he abstained from wine.[5] In addition to his leadership, he was also a renowned Arab poet.[6]

The Prophet (s) spent his childhood in the home of Abū Ṭālib (a) and his wife, Fāṭima bt. Asad (a), receiving all the dignity and respect they could offer. Numerous accounts highlight how Abū Ṭālib (a) and Fāṭima cared for Muḥammad (s).[7] Abū Ṭālib (a), who was involved in the wheat and perfume trade,[8] often took his nephew Muḥammad (s) along on his commercial journeys. During one such journey to the Levant, a Christian monk recognized signs of Prophethood in Muḥammad (s). The monk advised Abū Ṭālib (a) to send his nephew back to Mecca to protect him from potential harm by the Jews. Abū Ṭālib (a) heeded this advice and returned to Mecca with Muḥammad (s).[9]

Existing reports suggest that Abū Ṭālib (a) was aware of Muḥammad's imminent Prophethood.[10] Some accounts indicate that ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib had informed Abū Ṭālib (a) of this.[11] Besides the story of the Christian monk, another event supports this notion. During one year of the Prophet's childhood, Mecca was struck by a severe drought. Abū Ṭālib (a) took Muḥammad (s) outside, placed him against the wall of the Kaaba, and prayed for rain. Shortly after, rain began to fall. Abū Ṭālib (a) even composed a poem to commemorate this incident.[12]

In another instance, Abū Ṭālib (a) revealed his prior awareness of Muḥammad's special status. While asking Khadīja bt. Khuwaylid (a) to accept Muḥammad's marriage proposal, he delivered a sermon saying, "Praise be to God, who made us the progeny of

1. See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 29.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 57.
3. See Ibid., 2: 23; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 14.
4. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 14.
5. Ḥalabī, *al-Sīra al-Ḥalabiyya*, 1: 165.
6. Jumḥī, *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarā'*, 92, 95.
7. See e.g., Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 96; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 14; Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 1: 37.
8. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, 575.
9. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 180-83.
10. See e.g., Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmāʿ*, 4: 99-101; see also Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 14.
11. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 95; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 14.
12. Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 2: 161-62; Dhahabī, Tārīkh al-Islām, 1: 52-53.

Abraham and the children of Ishmael... My nephew, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh, is unmatched by any other man of the Quraysh; he surpasses them all ... I swear by God that he has a great status and a universal mission."[1]

Supporting the Prophet (s) after His Prophetic Mission

As previously mentioned, Abū Ṭālib (a) was aware that Muḥammad (s) would be appointed by God as a Prophet (s). After the beginning of his Prophetic mission and during the period of his secret call to Islam, the Prophet (s) invited his kin and relatives to embrace the faith.[2] During this time, ʿAlī (a) accompanied the Prophet (s) to the outskirts of Mecca, where they worshiped God together. One day, Abū Ṭālib (a) saw them and asked his son ʿAlī (a) what religion Muḥammad (s) had embraced. When ʿAlī (a) declared his belief in God and His Prophet (s), explaining that he prayed along Muḥammad (s) and followed him, Abū Ṭālib (a) responded, "He has called you to what is good. Accompany him."[3] In another account, Abū Ṭālib (a) advised his son ʿAlī (a), saying, "My son, keep the company of your cousin so that you will be protected from all hardships, whether near [in this world] or far [in the hereafter]."[4] He gave the same counsel to his other son, Jaʿfar, urging him to perform prayer alongside the Prophet (s).[5] This event occurred during the Prophet's period of secret preaching.[6]

When the verse "Warn the nearest of your kinsfolk" (Q 26:214) was revealed, the Prophet (s) instructed ʿAlī (a) to arrange a meeting with the elders of the Quraysh. Abū Ṭālib (a), likely already aware of the Prophetic call to Islam, not only attended the gathering[7] but, according to some accounts, also hosted it.[8] During the meeting, Abū Ṭālib (a) declared his support for the Prophet (s), saying, "I swear by God that I am the first to respond to your call. Do whatever you are commanded to do. I swear by God that I will protect and defend you." Moreover, when his brother Abū Lahab tried to scatter the Quraysh away from the Prophet (s), Abū Ṭālib (a) reaffirmed his support for Muḥammad (s).[9] In another instance, when Imam ʿAlī (a) expressed his readiness to support the Prophet (s) and faced objections from others, Abū Ṭālib (a) responded, "Leave him alone,

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 20.
2. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 243.
3. Ibid., 1: 247; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 314.
4. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 14: 75.
5. ʿAskarī, *al-Awāʾil*, 109; Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 2: 272.
6. See Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 4: 25.
7. See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 319-21.
8. Ḥalabī, a*l-Sīra al-Ḥalabiyya*, 1: 406.
9. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 119; see also Ibn Ṭāwūs, *al-Ṭarāʾif*, 1: 299-300, 302-3.

for he will spare no effort in showing kindness to his cousin."[1] Thus began Abū Ṭālib's unwavering support for the Prophet (s) and the Muslims, which continued until the end of his life.

Initially, since the Prophet's call was limited to a few individuals, the Quraysh did not take any significant actions against the new religion. However, as the number of Muslims began to grow, the Quraysh felt threatened and decided to oppose the Prophet (s). On one occasion, a group of polytheists attacked and insulted Muslims who were engaged in worship around Mecca, prompting a reaction from some of the believers. Realizing that Muḥammad (s) was under the protection of Abū Ṭālib (a), the Quraysh decided to negotiate with him.[2]

The polytheists approached Abū Ṭālib (a) and requested that he either prevent the Prophet (s) from spreading Islam or withdraw his support. Abū Ṭālib (a) responded to them gently, and they departed. However, as the call to Islam expanded and the number of Muslims grew, the polytheists returned to Abū Ṭālib (a). This time, they acknowledged his greatness and nobility, which had thus far restrained them from acting against Muḥammad (s). They then issued an ultimatum: either Abū Ṭālib (a) should stop the Prophet's mission, or they would unite to fight against the Muslims. Abū Ṭālib (a) conveyed this threat to Muḥammad (s), advising him to cease the public call to Islam to ensure his own safety and that of the Muslims. However, the Prophet (s) expressed his unwavering commitment to his divine duty. Seeing Muḥammad's determination, Abū Ṭālib (a) said, "My nephew, go and proclaim whatever you wish. I swear by God that I will never surrender you to anyone." The polytheists approached Abū Ṭālib (a) once again, this time accompanied by ʿUmāra b. al-Walīd. They praised ʿUmāra's handsomeness and wisdom and proposed that Abū Ṭālib (a) take him under his protection in exchange for surrendering the Prophet (s). This suggestion angered Abū Ṭālib (a), who declared it a lasting disgrace for the polytheists. When al-Muṭʿim b. ʿAdī, a prominent Quraysh leader, threatened him, Abū Ṭālib (a) responded, "You agreed to humiliate me and incited the Quraysh against me. So, do whatever you can."[3]

When the negotiations failed, the Quraysh polytheists began persecuting the Muslims. Seeing the worsening situation, Abū Ṭālib (a) called upon the Hashimites (Banū Hāshim) to support the Prophet (s) and the Muslims. All the Hashimites agreed, except for Abū Lahab. Witnessing the firm and sincere support of the Banū Hāshim, Abū Ṭālib

1. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 147; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 42: 46.
2. Ibn Isḥāq, *K. al-Siyar wa l-maghāzī*, 147.
3. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 265-67; see also Ṭabrisī, *Iʿlām al-warā*, 39-40.

(a) composed a poem expressing his sentiments: "We have defended the messenger of the King [of the earth and sky] … I defend the messenger of the Owner [of the earth and sky] and will support him as a kind and charitable protector." In another poem, he wrote, "If the greatest of ʿAbd Manāf [= the Quraysh] stand, the Banū Hāshim will also send their greatest. If they [= the Quraysh] take pride in someone, then indeed Muḥammad is the chosen one from among the noblemen." In yet another verse, he declared, "We did no wrong to the Quraysh except by defending the most superior individual to ever walk the earth … so I swear by God, that if there were no God besides whom nothing else exists, none of your property would be safe from us."[1]

Another consequence of the failed negotiations between the Quraysh and Abū Ṭālib (a) was their decision to murder the Prophet (s). During a meeting where both the Prophet (s) and Abū Ṭālib (a) were present, the Quraysh leaders demanded that the Prophet (s) abandon his call to Islam. When the Prophet (s) refused and instead invited them to embrace monotheism, they became enraged, and one of them threatened to kill him. Later that same day, Abū Ṭālib (a), worried by this threat and unable to find Muḥammad (s), mobilized the young men of the Banū Hāshim. He instructed them to secretly prepare their swords and attend the assembly of the Quraysh, each sitting beside one of the senior figures. His plan was that if any harm came to Muḥammad (s), they would kill all of the Quraysh leaders. Shortly after, when Abū Ṭālib (a) learned that the Prophet (s) was safe, he called off the Hashimites. The next day, Abū Ṭālib (a) confronted the Quraysh leaders and revealed his plan, saying, "I swear by God, if you had killed him, I would not have left a single one of you alive." This declaration shamed and embarrassed the polytheists.[2] It was likely after these events that Abū Ṭālib (a) appointed some young Hashimites to guard and protect the Prophet (s) at all times.[3]

The Muslims were not immune to the persecutions of the polytheists. For this reason, the Prophet (s) recommended that a group of them, led by Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib, migrate to Abyssinia to seek refuge from these persecutions.[4] When the Quraysh polytheists learned of the Muslim migration, they sent a delegation with gifts to the Negus (*al-najāshī*, the title for the Abyssinian kings), the ruler of Abyssinia, hoping to have the emigrant Muslims returned to the Hijaz. However, in the presence of the Negus, the Quraysh delegation was outmatched by the measured words of Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib and failed to

1. Ibn Isḥāq, *K. al-Siyar wa l-maghāzī*, 148-50; Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 1: 59.
2. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 158-59.
3. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 66: 324.
4. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 321-22.

convince the Abyssinian ruler to deport the Muslims. During the negotiations, the Negus expressed his support for the emigrant Muslims and promised to ensure their well-being.[1] When Abū Ṭālib (a) learned of the Negus's favorable treatment of the Muslims, he sent him a poem praising his support. He wrote, "The best of people know that Muḥammad is the support of Moses and Christ. He has brought guidance like theirs. All [Prophets] guide and protect [against misguidance] at the command of God."[2]

When Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet's uncle, converted to Islam, it was a blessed and auspicious event for the Muslims. This conversion further elevated the status of Islam in Mecca and disheartened the polytheists. The Prophet (s) and the Muslims now had another powerful supporter in addition to Abū Ṭālib (a).[3] According to some accounts, Abū Ṭālib (a) was delighted by his brother Ḥamza's conversion to Islam and composed a poem encouraging him to follow the Prophet (s) and embrace his religion.[4]

The Quraysh continued their sinister plots, determined to eliminate and kill the Prophet (s). In response, Abū Ṭālib (a) composed a poem in support of the Prophet (s), which disheartened the Quraysh unbelievers from harming him. The poem read: "I swear by God that they [i.e., the Quraysh] will not lay a hand on you unless they bury me underground. You called me out of goodwill [to the right path]. Truly, you were honest and trustworthy in your call. You presented [to me] a religion that I knew was the best of all religions." Thus, in year 617, as the Quraysh polytheists failed to stop the spread of the Prophet's message through threats and bribes, they decided to confine the Prophet (s) and his supporters in the Valley (*Shiʿb*) of Abī Ṭālib.[5]

The senior figures of the Quraysh allied together and made an agreement to sanction and blockade the Banū Hāshim. They agreed not to trade with the Hashimites or engage in marriages with them. To ensure the enforcement of this agreement, they placed its text within the Kaaba.[6] When Abū Ṭālib (a) learned of this agreement, he protested through a poem. At the beginning of the poem, he addressed the Quraysh tribes: "Do you not know that we have found Muḥammad to be a Prophet like Moses, as mentioned in ancient scriptures." Accompanied by the Banū Hāshim, Abū Ṭālib (a) went to the Kaaba, grasped its curtain, and complained to God about the cruelties of their kin. He prayed, "God, if our kin seek only to plot against us, then hasten our triumph and hinder them

1. See Ibid., 1: 335-57; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 29-30.
2. Ibn Isḥāq, *K. al-Siyar wa l-maghāzī*, 221-22.
3. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 292.
4. Karājakī, *Kanz al-fawā'id*, 1: 181; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 14: 76.
5. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 31.
6. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 350.

from killing my nephew." Following this, at Abū Ṭālib's command, the Hashimites, including the Prophet (s), settled in the Valley of Abī Ṭālib.[1] The only member of the Banū Hāshim who did not join them in the valley was Abū Lahab.[2]

Within the valley, Abū Ṭālib (a) was deeply concerned about the safety of his nephew. Every night, after everyone had gone to sleep, Abū Ṭālib (a) would change the Prophet's sleeping place, placing him among himself and his children, fearing that the polytheists might attempt to kill the Prophet (s) overnight.[3] On some occasions, Abū Ṭālib (a) even placed his son ʿAlī (a) in the Prophet's place. According to one account, he composed a poem encouraging his son to sacrifice his life for the Prophet (s).[4] Abū Ṭālib (a) spared no effort in supporting the Muslims confined within the valley, even spending all his wealth in their cause.[5]

When the Prophet (s) learned through divine revelation that termites had eaten away the text of the polytheists' agreement, leaving only God's name intact, he shared this news with his uncle, Abū Ṭālib (a). Upon hearing this, Abū Ṭālib (a) said to the Prophet (s), "Truly, your God is right, and I bear witness that you are truthful." Accompanied by several members of the Banū Hāshim, Abū Ṭālib (a) met with the senior figures of the Quraysh, emphasizing the truthfulness of Muḥammad (s) and informing them that God had revealed the termites' destruction of their agreement to the Prophet (s). When the polytheists verified the accuracy of this news, Abū Ṭālib (a) rebuked them through poetry. In one poem, he declared, "'Abd Allāh's son [i.e, the Prophet (s)] is truthful, while our kin are enraged. O Muslims, do not think that Muḥammad is without support. The hands of the Banū Hāshim, the strongest hands there are, will defend him."[6]

Abū Ṭālib (a)'s Demise

Shortly after the end of the valley confinement, Abū Ṭālib (a) fell ill and was confined to bed. Before passing away, he delivered his will in the presence of the Banū Hāshim. In his will, Abū Ṭālib (a) reminded them of the esteemed status of the Hashimites among the Arabs, urging them to perform good deeds and help those in need. He then specifically advised them regarding the Prophet (s), saying, "I advise you to be good to Muḥammad. He is trustworthy among the Quraysh and truthful among the Arabs. He embodies every

1. Ibn Isḥāq, *K. al-Siyar wa l-maghāzī*, 157-59.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 230.
3. Ibn Isḥāq, *K. al-Siyar wa l-maghāzī*, 160.
4. Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 1: 64; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 14: 64.
5. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 31.
6. Ibn Isḥāq, *K. al-Siyar wa l-maghāzī*, 161-64.

good quality I have urged upon you." Abū Ṭālib (a) also predicted that Muḥammad's religion would eventually dominate the Arabs. He commanded the Hashimites to follow the Prophet (s) and added, "Be his helpers and defend his group [i.e., the Muslims]. I swear by God that those who follow his path will be guided, and those who embrace his guidance will find true happiness. If death had given me more time, I would have prevented any agitations against him and shielded him from all hardships."[1] This will was also transmitted by Imam al-Ṣādiq (a).[2]

In another hadith, Abū Ṭālib's will to the Banū Hāshim was as follows: "As long as you listen to and embrace Muḥammad's words, you will continue to prosper. Follow him and help him to stay on the right path."[3] Additionally, a poem attributed to Abū Ṭālib (a) invites the Hashimites to support and aid the Prophet (s).[4]

When Abū Ṭālib (a) passed away in 620, the Prophet (s) was deeply saddened. He repeatedly wiped his face with his hand and cried, "O uncle, you reared me as a child, took custody of me when I was orphaned, and supported me as I grew into adulthood. May God reward you with goodness." As the Prophet (s) departed with Abū Ṭālib's body, he would look at his uncle and say, "May God reward you for upholding the rights of kinship."[5] The Prophet (s) remarked on Abū Ṭālib's support: "As long as Abū Ṭālib was alive, the Quraysh could never harm me."[6] The deaths of Abū Ṭālib (a) and Khadīja bt. Khuwaylid (a) occurred within a short span of time, leading the Prophet (s) to refer to that year as the Year of Sorrow (ʿĀm al-Ḥuzn), saying: "Two tragedies befell our community, and I do not know which one saddens me more."[7]

The Prophet (s) always spoke highly of Abū Ṭālib (a). On one occasion, when some Muslims around Medina complained to the Prophet (s) about a drought, he prayed for rain, and it soon began to fall. At that moment, the Prophet (s) remarked, "Well spoke Abū Ṭālib. If he were alive, he would be delighted by this event. Who can recite his poetry?" Imam ʿAlī (a) then recited a poem by his father, Abū Ṭālib (a): "The white-faced

1. Suhaylī, *al-Rawḍ al-unuf*, 4: 20-21; Kalāī, *al-Iktifāʾ*, 1: 295-96.
2. Fattāl al-Naysābūrī, *Rawḍat al-wāʿiẓīn*, 1: 139-40.
3. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 98.
4. Fattāl al-Naysābūrī, *Rawḍat al-wāʿiẓīn*, 1: 55; Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, 1: 61.
5. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 35.
6. Ibn Isḥāq, *K. al-Siyar wa l-maghāzī*, 329; Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, 2: 679.
7. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 35.

one who asks the clouds to rain."[1] This referred to Abū Ṭālib's prayer for rain when the Prophet (s) was still a child.[2]

After their migration to Medina, the Muslims continued to remember Abū Ṭālib's support. When ʿUbayda b. al-Ḥārith was injured during the Battle of Badr, he was brought to the Prophet (s). ʿUbayda said to the Prophet (s), "If Abū Ṭālib were alive, he would know that we have lived up to his expectations." He then recited a poem by Abū Ṭālib (a): "I swear by God's House that you [polytheists] are liars. We would never abandon Muḥammad until we fight for him and are wounded. We would never surrender him until we are killed defending him and sacrifice our wives and children."[3]

The Problem of Abū Ṭālib's Faith

As history attests, Abū Ṭālib's support for the Prophet (s), the Muslims, and the call to Islam is a well-established fact. However, there are hadiths in Sunni sources that either implicitly or explicitly suggest that Abū Ṭālib (a) did not embrace Islam. Nonetheless, historical accounts from 1st/7th century contain no evidence of Abū Ṭālib's lack of faith in Islam.

During Imam ʿAlī's reign (35-40/656-61) and his political struggles with Muʿāwiya, there was no skepticism about Abū Ṭālib's faith. On one occasion, Imam ʿAlī (a) took pride in his father Abū Ṭālib (a), asserting that Abū Ṭālib (a) was superior to Abū Sufyān, Muʿāwiya's father.[4] It is well documented that Abū Sufyān converted to Islam only after the Conquest of Mecca in 8/630.[5] If Abū Ṭālib's lack of faith had been a known fact at the time, Muʿāwiya would have used it as a pretext to undermine Imam ʿAlī's reputation. Furthermore, Muʿāwiya attempted to tarnish ʿAqīl b. Abī Ṭālib (Imam ʿAlī's brother) by referencing the unbelief of his uncle Abū Lahab.[6] If Muʿāwiya had believed that Abū Ṭālib (a) lacked faith, he would have used that against ʿAqīl by highlighting his father's supposed unbelief. Additionally, on some occasions, Muʿāwiya acknowledged the superiority of Abū Ṭālib (a) over his own father, Abū Sufyān, and regarded him as superior to the entire Banū Umayya.[7]

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1. Māwardī, *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa*, 142; Bayhaqī, *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, 1: 141.
2. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 2: 161-62.
3. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 1: 79-80.
4. See Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 277-82.
5. See e.g., Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 2: 714.
6. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 73.
7. Ḍubbī, *Akhbār al-wāfidīn*, 19-20.

During the Abbasid era, particularly in 145/762, when Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (d. 145/762) exchanged letters with the Abbāsid caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136-58/754-75), al-Manṣūr used the issue of Abū Ṭālib's faith as a pretext to argue that the Alawites were unfit for the caliphate.[1] This topic was further emphasized during the Imamate of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) (114-48/733-64) as a result of Abbasid propaganda. However, there are hadiths transmitted from Imam ʿAlī (a), Imam al-Sajjād (a), Imam al-Bāqir (a), Imam al-Kāẓim (a), Imam al-Riḍā (a), and Imam al-ʿAskarī (a) affirming Abū Ṭālib's faith.

Abū Ṭālib's Faith in the view of the Imams

In Shiite hadith sources, there are numerous narrations from the Imams confirming Abū Ṭālib's faith. These hadiths are dispersed throughout early Shiite texts[2] and have been compiled in parts of the book *al-Ḥujja ʿalā al-dhāhib ilā kufri Abī Ṭālib* (Argument against advocates of Abū Ṭālib's unbelief) by Fakhkhār b. Maʿad al-Mūsawī.[3]

Regarding his father's faith, Imam ʿAlī (a), the Commander of the Faithful, stated that when Abū Ṭālib (a) was on his deathbed, the Prophet (s) visited him and gave him good tidings that were worth more than anything else in the world.[4] In another hadith, Imam ʿAlī (a) recommended his Shias and followers to perform the hajj circumambulation (*ṭawāf*) on behalf of Abū Ṭālib (a).[5] Imam al-Sajjād (a) also defended Abū Ṭālib's faith, arguing that since Abū Ṭālib's marriage to Fāṭima bt. al-Asad (a) was not nullified despite her explicit conversion to Islam, it indicates that Abū Ṭālib (a) was also a Muslim. According to Islamic jurisprudence, when a woman embraces Islam while her husband remains an unbeliever, their marriage is automatically nullified.[6]

In refutation of the belief that Abū Ṭālib (a) had no faith in Islam, Imam al-Bāqir (a) emphatically called it a grave lie, stating: "I swear by God that if Abū Ṭālib's faith were placed on one scale and the faith of all other people on the other, Abū Ṭālib's faith would outweigh them all." Imam al-Bāqir (a) also cited Imam ʿAlī's recommendation to perform Hajj on behalf of Abū Ṭālib (a) as further proof of his faith.[7] Additionally, Imam al-Bāqir (a) pointed to key events in Abū Ṭālib's life, such as his protection of the Prophet (s) and

1. See Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 3: 98-102; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 7: 568-69.
2. See e.g., Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, 1: 445, 448-49; Karājakī, *Kanz al-fawā'id*, 1: 179-84; Fattāl al-Naysābūrī, *Rawḍat al-wāʿiẓīn*, 1: 138-43.
3. See Mūsawī, *al-Ḥujja*, 68-85, 103-43, 361-63.
4. Ibid., 112.
5. Ibid., 84-85.
6. Ibid., 123-24; see also Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 14: 69.
7. Mūsawī, *al-Ḥujja*, 84-85.

his encouragement of his sons, ʿAlī (a) and Jaʿfar, to follow the Prophet (s), as clear evidence of his unwavering faith.[1]

Most hadiths regarding Abū Ṭālib's faith are from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a),[2] who describes Abū Ṭālib (a) as a friend of the Prophets and among the sincere, martyrs, and the righteous.[3] Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) cites Abū Ṭālib's poems as evidence of his faith. In response to a question about Abū Ṭālib's faith, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) references a statement by Imam ʿAlī (a),[4] who described his father's face on the Day of Resurrection as brighter than all other creatures, except for the Prophet (s), Fāṭima (a), and the Imams (a).[5] Additionally, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) is reported to have loved Abū Ṭālib's poems and advised, "Learn [those poems] and teach them to your children, as he [i.e., Abū Ṭālib (a)] was committed to God's religion, and there is much knowledge in his poems."[6] Imam al-Kāẓim (a) also describes Abū Ṭālib (a) as the executor (*waṣī*) of the Prophets before Prophet Muḥammad (s), asserting that Abū Ṭālib (a) believed in the Prophet (s) and his message before his death.[7]

During the Imamate of Imam al-Riḍā (a), under the influence of Abbasid propaganda, letters were sent to him by Shias regarding Abū Ṭālib's faith. One Shia wrote expressing doubts about Abū Ṭālib's faith. In response, Imam al-Riḍā (a) wrote, "If someone 'follows a way other than that of the faithful, we shall abandon him to his devices.' (Q 4:115) Indeed, if you do not believe in the faith of Abū Ṭālib, your destiny will be Hell."[8] In another instance, ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm al-Ḥasanī wrote to Imam al-Riḍā (a) inquiring about a hadith he had heard concerning Abū Ṭālib's lack of faith. The Imam (a) responded, "If you harbor doubts about Abū Ṭālib's faith, your destination will be Hell."[9]

Based on the hadiths transmitted by the Imams (a), it can be inferred that questions regarding Abū Ṭālib's faith began to emerge during the Imamate of Imam al-Bāqir (a) (95-114/713-33). These inquiries intensified during the Imamate of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) (114-48/733-65), a period marked by Alawite uprisings against the Abbasid government. The hadiths also suggest that the Imams (a) presented evidence and arguments concerning

1. Ibid., 140-42.
2. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 499; Mūsawī, *al-Ḥujja*, 82-83.
3. Karājakī, *Kanz al-fawā'id*, 1: 183; Mūsawī, *al-Ḥujja*, 82-83.
4. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 448-49.
5. Karājakī, *Kanz al-fawā'id*, 1: 183; Mūsawī, *al-Ḥujja*, 73-74.
6. Mūsawī, *al-Ḥujja*, 129-30.
7. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 445.
8. Karājakī, *Kanz al-fawā'id*, 1: 182-83; Mūsawī, *al-Ḥujja*, 76-77.
9. Mūsawī, *al-Ḥujja*, 81-82.

Abū Ṭālib's faith. Among other things, these arguments emphasized Abū Ṭālib's support for the Prophet (s) against the Quraysh polytheists, and in some instances, the monotheistic themes present in Abū Ṭālib's poetry were cited as evidence of his faith.

The emphasis on belief in Abū Ṭālib's faith within the hadiths is particularly noteworthy. Hadiths attributed to Imam ʿAlī (a) imply Abū Ṭālib's faith, while arguments supporting his faith are presented during the period of Imam al-Sajjād (a). During the Imamate of Imam al-Bāqir (a) and Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), hadiths highlight Abū Ṭālib's status on the Day of Resurrection and the superiority of his faith over that of all other creatures. By the time of Imam al-Riḍā (a) (183-203/799-818), the emphasis on the importance of belief in Abū Ṭālib's faith was even stronger, to the extent that doubting it was equated with deserving Hell.

Abū Ṭālib's Faith According to Imami Theologians and Scholars of Hadith

Shiite scholars of hadith and theologians have given significant attention to the question of Abū Ṭālib's faith. Among the works authored by Shiite scholars of hadith,[1] there are several books specifically dedicated to Abū Ṭālib (a), covering topics such as his faith, eloquence, poetry, virtues, and related news.[2] Al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852 /1449) mentions certain Shiite writings on Abū Ṭālib's faith and highlights some of their arguments.[3] Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, referencing some of these Shiite works, presents detailed arguments from Shiite theologians in support of Abū Ṭālib's faith.[4] Additionally, some non-Shiite historians and scholars of hadith have also written on this topic.[5]

Prominent Imami figures have reported a consensus among Shiites regarding Abū Ṭālib's faith, attributing this belief to all Imami Shias.[6] Several eminent Shiite theologians, including al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/992)[7] and al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022), authored monographs on Abū Ṭālib's faith. Of these works, only al-Shaykh al-Mufīd's book titled *Imān Abī Ṭālib* (Abū Ṭālib's Faith) is still available to us. Additionally, some other Shiite scholars of hadith have addressed the issue within their broader writings.[8]

1. Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 87, 95, 265.
2. Ibid., 58, 177-78, 186, 218.
3. ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, 7: 198.
4. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 14: 65-84.
5. Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 148.
6. Ṣadūq, *al-Iʿtiqādāt*, 110; Mufīd, *Awāʾil al-maqālāt*, 46; Ḥillī, *Ajwabat al-masāʾil al-Muhannāʾiyya*, 127.
7. Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 390.
8. See e.g., Karājakī, *Kanz al-fawāʾid*, 1: 179-84; Fattāl al-Naysābūrī, *Rawḍat al-wāʿiẓīn*, 1: 138-43.

In the theological and hadith sources authored by prominent Imami figures that are available to us, the development of arguments supporting Abū Ṭālib's faith can be traced.[1] A notable aspect of these sources is the emphasis on poems attributed to Abū Ṭālib (a), which were composed in defense of the Prophet (s). As noted in our account of Abū Ṭālib's life, these poems, as recorded in historical reports, provide evidence of his monotheistic belief. The citation of Abū Ṭālib's monotheistic poems is also evident in hadiths from the Imams concerning his faith. In early Imami theological sources, dating back to 4-5th/11-12th centuries, references are made to Abū Ṭālib's support for the Prophet (s) and his efforts to encourage others to embrace Islam as evidence of his faith in the Prophet (s). What is consistent across all Imami theological works on Abū Ṭālib's faith is the citation of both his poems and his actions in support of the Prophet (s) and Islam.

By 6th/13th century, works began to incorporate hadiths from the Imams affirming Abū Ṭālib's faith in the Prophet (s) and his embrace of Islam into theological arguments for his faith. Earlier sources rarely cited these hadiths, likely because most of their arguments were aimed at countering Sunni scholars. As a result, they primarily focused on Abū Ṭālib's poems and actions, which were also cited and confirmed in Sunni historical and hadith sources.

In the subsequent period, around 7th/14th century, Shiite arguments for Abū Ṭālib's faith began to include hadiths and reports from Sunni sources of history, hadith, and Quranic exegesis that implied his belief in Islam. This shift was likely a response to the growing claim within the Sunni community, particularly among their scholars, that Abū Ṭālib (a) lacked faith. By 9th/16th century, Shiite works further strengthened their arguments by incorporating not only Sunni hadiths but also statements from Sunni scholars that confirmed Abū Ṭālib's faith.

Considering the development of Imami theological writings on Abū Ṭālib's faith, the main arguments supporting his belief can be categorized as follows:

- Abū Ṭālib's consistent support of the Prophet (s)
- The monotheistic themes present in Abū Ṭālib's poems
- Hadiths from the Imams affirming Abū Ṭālib's faith

1. See Mīlānī, *Mawsūʿat al-turāth al-Imāmī*, 1: 380-404.

The Companions of Imam ʿAlī (a)

Introduction

One important aspect of the life of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) pertains to his loyal companions. Providing a list of fifteen of Imam ʿAlī's most notable companions based on their dates of death, this article seeks to present a summary of their lives. The criteria for the selection included their active roles in the events that unfolded during ʿAlī's era. The present article seeks to offer an overview of the lives of certain companions of Imam ʿAlī (a) across different periods, based on primary historical sources.

Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī (d. 32/652)

His name was Jundab b. Junāda. Although there is some discrepancy in sources regarding his and his father's names, it appears that "Jundab" is historically more widely recognized. He belonged to the al-Ghifār tribe. While the year of Abū Dhar's birth is unknown, his death is recorded in 32/625. After being exiled to al-Rabadha[1] by ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, he passed away in that region.[2]

1. A village located a three-day journey (approximately 120 kilometers) from Medina, situated along the route to Mecca (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 3: 24).
2. See Abū Nʿaym al-Aṣbahānī, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, 1: 457; Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 1: 252-53.

During the Prophetic Era

Abū Dhar is considered among those who, during the pre-Islamic period, prohibited the consumption of alcohol and drunkenness upon himself.[1] According to reports, Abū Dhar was a monotheist before becoming acquainted with the Prophet (s) and embracing Islam.[2] He is regarded as the fourth or fifth person to accept Islam,[3] converting during the Prophet's private invitation to the faith.[4]

ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās (d. 68/687) recounts the story of Abū Dhar's conversion to Islam: having heard of the Prophet (s) through his brother, Abū Dhar set out for Mecca to meet the Messenger of God (a). After a few days, through ʿAlī (a), he came into the Prophet's presence, where the Prophet (s) invited him to Islam, and Abū Dhar embraced the faith. The Messenger of God then said to him, "O Abū Dhar, keep this matter hidden and return to your homeland. When you hear that my Prophethood has been publicly declared, come to me." However, Abū Dhar replied, "By the One who has sent you with the truth, I shall proclaim your Prophethood aloud to them." He then went to the Kaaba and declared the two testimonies (oneness of Allah and Prophethood of Muḥammad). The polytheists attacked him, beating him severely until ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib intervened, leading them to release him.[5]

It is likely that, after the incident in Mecca, Abū Dhar returned to his homeland among the Ghifār tribe and later joined the Muslims following the Prophet's migration to Medina. When the Prophet (s) established bonds of brotherhood between the Migrants (*al-Muhājirūn*) and the Helpers (*al-Anṣār*), he paired Abū Dhar with al-Mundhir b. ʿAmr al-Muʿniq.[6] During the Battle of Tabūk, Abū Dhar fell behind the Muslim caravan due to the weakness of his mount, continuing the journey alone. After the Muslims had settled, they suddenly saw someone approaching. The Prophet (s) went to welcome Abū Dhar, saying, "Welcome, O Abū Dhar. He walks alone, he will die alone, and he will be resurrected alone [on the Day of Resurrection]."[7] When Ibn Masʿūd was present at Abū Dhar's side after his death, he referenced the Prophet's (a) words, saying, "The Messenger of God spoke truly. May God have mercy on Abū Dhar. He walks alone,

1. Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, 237.
2. See Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 7: 338; Muslīm b. al-Ḥajjaj. *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4: 1919.
3. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 4: 169; Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 1: 252.
4. See Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 4: 167.
5. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4: 184; Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, 9: 333-34; see also Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 4: 169-70.
6. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 506.
7. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 3: 1000.

he dies alone, and he will be resurrected alone." Then he entered the grave and placed him within it.[1]

Hadiths have been transmitted from the Prophet (s) in praise of Abū Dhar. In some of these hadiths, the Prophet (s) likens Abū Dhar to Jesus.[2] In some other hadiths, this resemblance is attributed to Abū Dhar's asceticism and humility.[3] In a frequently cited hadith, the Prophet (s) said about him, "The sky has not shaded, nor has the earth carried anyone more truthful than Abū Dharr."[4] In another hadith, it is reported that God commanded the Prophet (s) to love four people, among whom was Abū Dhar.[5] According to some reports, the Prophet (s) foretold Abū Dhar's eventual exile from Medina.[6]

During the Caliphs' Era

Abū Dhar is counted among those who refrained from pledging allegiance to Abū Bakr in defense of ʿAlī's (a) rightful claim to the caliphate.[7] Not present in Medina at the time of the pledge to Abū Bakr, upon his return and learning of the events, Abū Dhar voiced his objection.[8] According to one account, he, along with a group that included Salmān al-Fārsī and al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad, gathered at night with the intention of reconsidering the matter of the caliphate.[9] When ʿAlī (a) requested that his supporters, if sincere in their allegiance to him, assemble the following morning with shaved heads, Abū Dhar was one of the three who did so.[10] Additionally, some sources name Abū Dhar as one of the few who attended the secret burial of Fāṭima (a), the daughter of the Prophet (s) and wife of ʿAlī (a).[11]

There is no information available regarding Abū Dhar's interactions with Abū Bakr and ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and their caliphates, but it appears that he did not have a favorable relationship with ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān. Abū Dhar is listed among those who objected to ʿUthmān's caliphate.[12] One report suggests that when someone complained

1. Ḥākim al-Baysābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 52.
2. Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, 6: 146; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Āḥād wa l-mathānī*, 2: 231.
3. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 4: 172; Ibn Abī shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 388.
4. See e.g, Ibn Ṭahmān, *Mashyakha*, 190; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1: 108; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, 6: 145.
5. Aḥmad b. Ānbal, *Musnad*, 38: 121; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1: 104; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, 6: 79.
6. See Aḥmad b. Ānbal, *Musnad*, 45: 568.
7. See Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 124; Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 2: 461-65.
8. Jawharī, al-Saqīfa wa Fadak, 62.
9. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 219-20.
10. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 32-33; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 126.
11. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 115.
12. Ibid., 2: 163.

to Abū Dhar about the excessive demands of ʿUthmān's tax collectors and asked whether it was permissible to refuse paying the extra amount, Abū Dhar told him that he could indeed refuse. When another person reminded Abū Dhar that the caliph had prohibited issuing fatwas, Abū Dhar replied, "By the One in whose hand is my soul, if a sword were placed upon my neck and I intended to convey a saying of the Messenger of God, I would do so before you could kill me."[1]

ʿUthmān granted substantial gifts to his close associates, which led Abū Dhar to voice objections. He recited the verse, "Those who treasure up gold and silver, and do not spend it in the way of Allah, inform them of a painful punishment" (Q 9:34), identifying ʿUthmān and his associates as fitting this description. Upon hearing of this, ʿUthmān sent an emissary to Abū Dhar, asking him to cease his criticism.[2] In another incident, when Kaʿb al-Aḥbār issued a fatwa permitting ʿUthmān to use the public treasury for personal benefit, Abū Dhar, who was present, became outraged. He harshly reproached both Kaʿb and ʿUthmān, which greatly angered the caliph.[3]

Abū Dhar's objections to ʿUthmān's policies did not end here. One day, he went to the Prophet's Mosque (*al-Masjid al-Nabawī*), introduced himself, and delivered a sermon in defense of ʿAlī's (a) right to the caliphate. In this sermon, Abū Dhar emphasized the role of ʿAlī (a) as the rightful successor and inheritor, arguing that sidelining him from the caliphate was the main reason for the decline in implementing divine laws and ordinances. When ʿUthmān learned of Abū Dhar's criticisms against him, he exiled him to the Levant, where the governorship was under Muʿāwiya's control.[4]

Abū Dhar did not cease his protests even in the Levant. He criticized the policies and wealth accumulation of Muʿāwiya and his supporters, loudly voicing his objections in the streets and admonishing the wealthy of divine punishment. Muʿāwiya's attempts to placate him also proved futile.[5] Ultimately, Muʿāwiya wrote to ʿUthmān, stating that Abū Dhar's presence in the Levant was causing turmoil. In response, ʿUthmān ordered that Abū Dhar be returned to Medina on a saddleless camel under harsh conditions. Exhausted and with wounded feet from the journey, Abū Dhar was summoned by the caliph. Following a conversation about a Prophetic hadith that foretold the ʿUmayyads'

1. Ibn Zanjawayh, *al-Amwāl*, 3: 891; see also Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabqāt*, 2: 270; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1: 24.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 524.
3. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 240.
4. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 171. In some accounts of this sermon, the location is mentioned as Mecca, near the Kaaba. According to this hadith, Abū Dhar recounted prophetic hadiths regarding the status of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) (Hilālī, *K. Sulaym*, 2: 973; Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-dīn*, 1: 239; Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 582).
5. See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 3: 114.

lust for power and manipulation of religion—and with ʿAlī (a) testifying to Abū Dhar's truthfulness as affirmed by the Prophet (s)—ʿUthmān exiled him to the remote area of al-Rabadha. Imam ʿAlī (a), along with his sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (a), came to bid farewell to Abū Dhar. Seeing ʿAlī (a) and his sons (a), Abū Dhar kissed ʿAlī's hand and, overwhelmed with emotion, wept as he said, "Whenever I see you and your sons, I remember the words of the Prophet (s) [about you], and I cannot help but weep." Abū Dhar went to al-Rabadha, where he remained until his passing.[1]

It is narrated that before Abū Dhar left Medina, Imam ʿAlī (a) said to him: "O Abū Dhar, you became angry solely for the sake of God, so place your hope in Him. These people feared you for their worldly life, while you feared them for your religion. Thus, they have expelled you from their abode and put you to trial … So only keep the company of the truth, and flee only from falsehood." Following this, Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and ʿAmmār b. Yāsir also spoke words of support.[2] According to some reports, Abū Dhar continued his protests even in exile.[3]

When Abū Dhar lay on his deathbed, his wife began to weep upon seeing him in that state. When Abū Dhar asked why she was crying, she replied, "I weep because I do not have the means to bury you [by myself], nor a shroud to wrap you in." Abū Dhar reassured her, saying, "Do not worry, for I heard the Messenger of God say to a group of people, among whom I was present, 'Indeed, one of you will die in a desert land, and a group of believers will be present at his side.' All those who were in that gathering have since passed away among their kin, except for me, and it is only me who will die in the desert. By God, I have not lied, nor was I lied to. So, wait expectantly." Shortly after, Abū Dhar's wife saw a group of riders passing nearby and approached them. She informed them that a Muslim was about to die, asking for help with his burial and shrouding. When they learned it was Abū Dhar, they hurried to him. Abū Dhar said to them, "If I or my wife had even a piece of cloth sufficient for my shroud, I would not seek one from anyone else. I ask, by God, that none among you affiliated with the government shroud me." Only one among them had no ties to the government, so he gifted a shroud from his own possessions to Abū Dhar. Among those present at Abū Dhar's passing were ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd and Mālik al-Ashtar.[4]

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 171-72.
2. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 206-8.
3. See e.g., Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 35: 364-65.
4. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 4: 176-77.

Although Abū Dhar was exiled from Medina and lived far from the city, hadith sources indicate that Muslims frequently sought him out to learn the Prophet's (a) sayings. This is evidenced by chains of transmission of his hadiths.[1] Imam ʿAlī (a) is reported to have said about Abū Dhar: "He possessed great knowledge, beyond people's grasp. He was devoted to his faith and ardent for knowledge … He was granted such knowledge that it overflowed."[2] Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) is quoted as saying, "Most of Abū Dhar's worship had two characteristics: contemplation and taking lessons."[3] Imam al-Bāqir (a) mentioned Abū Dhar among those who remained steadfast with ʿAlī (a) and recognized his rights.[4] Additionally, Imam al-Kāẓim (a) reportedly stated that on the Day of Resurrection, a voice will call out: "Where are the disciples of Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh (a), the Messenger of God—those who fulfilled their covenants, never broke them, and remained steadfast?" Among those who will rise is Abū Dhar.[5] Reportedly, Shiite scholars, including al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991), wrote books on Abū Dhar's virtues and accounts.[6]

Al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad (d. 33/653)

His full name was al-Miqdād b. ʿAmr b. Thaʿlaba al-Bahrānī. Some have attributed him to the tribe of Kinda and called him al-Kindī.[7] Al-Miqdād's father, ʿAmr b. Thaʿlaba, fled from the Hijaz to Yemen after becoming involved in a violent conflict. In Yemen, he married al-Miqdād's mother. When al-Miqdād grew up, he had a disagreement with his maternal family, prompting him to leave Yemen and travel to Mecca. In Mecca, he made an alliance (*ḥilf*) with al-Aswad b. ʿAbd Yaghūth of the Banū Zuhra tribe, who adopted him as his son. Until the revelation of verse 5 from Surah al-Aḥzāb (33), "Call them after their fathers. That is more just with Allah", he was known as al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad. After this verse was revealed, he was known by his father's name as al-Miqdād b. ʿAmr.[8] Al-Miqdād was among the earliest converts to Islam in Mecca and one of the first to openly declare his faith. Given that his death is recorded in 33/653 at the age of seventy,[9] he was

1. See e.g., Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 35: 215-453 "Musnad Abī Dhar al-Ghifārī."
2. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 269-70.
3. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 1: 42.
4. Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 10.
5. Ibid., 61.
6. See Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 209, 391.
7. Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 4: 1480; see also Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, 2: 373.
8. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 119; Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Minammaq*, 263-64; Zubay b. Bakkār, *al-Akhbār al-muwaffaqiyyāt*, 120.
9. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 205; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 4: 478.

likely born around 583 CE. Al-Miqdād passed away on his property in the area of al-Jurf near Medina and was buried in Medina.[1]

During the Prophetic Era

Al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad is believed to be one of the earliest converts to Islam who openly declared his faith.[2] On one account, as the persecution of Muslims by the Meccan polytheists intensified, al-Miqdād and a group of others sought permission from the Prophet (s) to defend the Muslims with arms, but the Prophet (s) did not grant them permission.[3] He was among the first emigrants to Abyssinia in 615 CE.[4] Al-Miqdād was also among those who returned to Mecca two or three months later due to rumors that the people of Mecca had embraced Islam.[5]

There is uncertainty regarding how al-Miqdād migrated to Yathrib (Medina). On one hand, he is counted among those who openly declared their Islam and migrated to Abyssinia. On the other hand, some reports suggest he kept his faith concealed and joined the Muslims after participating with the Meccan polytheists in al-Kharrār expedition in 622 CE.[6] However, some accounts indicate that al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad served as the standard-bearer for the Muslims in al-Kharrār expedition.[7]

Regardless of how al-Miqdād joined the Muslims in Medina, he was among those who participated in every battle alongside the Prophet (s).[8] Before the Battle of Badr in 2/624, when news arrived that the army of the polytheists was approaching, the Prophet (s) consulted with his companions. After Abū Bakr spoke about the Quraysh's military power and greatness, al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad stood up and said, "O Messenger of God, follow what God has commanded you, for we are with you. By God, we will not say, as the Israelites said to their Prophet (s), "Go ahead, you and your Lord, and fight! We will be sitting right here" (Q 5:24). [Rather, we say:] Go forth, you and your Lord, and fight, for we shall fight alongside you. By the One who sent you with truth, if you lead us into the

1. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 205.
2. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 396; Dhahbī, *Tārīkh Islām*, 3: 418.
3. Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, 1: 390.
4. Ibn Isḥāq, K. *al-Siyar wa l-maghāzī*, 176, 225.
5. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 364-66.
6. See Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 69; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 404. Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr (d. 463/1071), however, records that al-Miqdād joined the Muslims during ʿUbayda b. al-Ḥārith's expedition (Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 4: 1481).
7. See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 403; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 3: 234; Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmāʿ*, 1: 72.
8. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 120.

sea, we will follow you." The Prophet (s) was pleased by al-Miqdād's words and led the Muslims toward the army of the polytheists.[1]

The Prophet (s) married his cousin Ḍubāʿa, the daughter of al-Zubayr b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, to al-Miqdād, who did not share the same social status and economic standing as the Quraysh, and remarked, "[I did this] so that the most honorable among you in the sight of God would be the best among you in faith."[2] In a hadith, the Prophet (s) described al-Miqdād as among those whom God loves and has commanded His Messenger to love as well.[3] In the early years following the Prophet's migration, a group including al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad gathered in ʿUthmān b. Maẓʿūn's house and resolved to withdraw from worldly life like Christian monks. When the Prophet (s) learned of this, the verse was revealed: "O you who have faith! Do not prohibit the good things that Allah has made lawful to you, and do not transgress" (Q 5:87), and they were dissuaded from their decision.[4] According to one report, when the Prophet (s) heard al-Miqdād reciting the Quran, he called him "glorifier" (*awwāb*).[5]

During the Caliphs' Era

Al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad is mentioned among those who objected to Abū Bakr's caliphate.[6] Some reports indicate that he was one of those who gathered in protest at the house of Fāṭima (a).[7] He is also reported as being among those who sought to reopen the matter of the caliphate for consultation.[8] Certain sources refer to al-Miqdād's outspoken objections to Abū Bakr and his caliphate.[9] According to Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), al-Miqdād was among those who, following the events of the Saqīfa of Banū Sāʿida and Abū Bakr's selection as caliph, never doubted ʿAlī's rightful position even for a moment. He was always armed, his gaze fixed on ʿAlī (a), awaiting his command, ready to act at once.[10]

There is no available information regarding al-Miqdād's interactions during the rest of Abū Bakr's caliphate and the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. Given that he resided

1. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 1: 48. In some reports, similar words from al-Miqdād are narrated regarding the events leading up to al-Ḥudaybiyya Peace Treaty (Abū Yūsuf, *al-Kharāj*, 227; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 7: 381).
2. Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 152-53.
3. Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1: 104; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, 79.
4. Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, 1: 499.
5. Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 4: 1482.
6. Barqī, *K. al-Rijāl*, 63; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 124.
7. Jawharī, *al-Saqīfa wa Fadak*, 38; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 2: 45.
8. Jawharī, *al-Saqīfa wa Fadak*, 46; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 220.
9. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 2: 463-64.
10. Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 9.

in the region of al-Jurf,[1] it can be inferred that he might have left Medina during this period. Al-Miqdād played an active role in the conquests during the reign of the second caliph. Reportedly, he was present in the conquests of regions such as the Levant (al-Shām),[2] Cyprus,[3] Egypt, and North Africa.[4] In the Levant, al-Miqdād was so influential that his recitation of the Quran gained prominence in the region.[5]

During the council convened to appoint ʿUmar's successor, al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad was among those who voiced his support for Imam ʿAlī (a). When ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf sought the people's opinions regarding the caliphate, ʿAmmār b. Yāsir proposed ʿAlī (a) as the most deserving candidate. Affirming ʿAmmār's statement, al-Miqdād said, "ʿAmmār has spoken the truth. If you pledge allegiance to ʿAlī, we will listen to him and obey him."[6] When ʿAbd al-Raḥmān pledged allegiance to ʿUthmān, al-Miqdād protested, saying:

> "How astonishing it is that the Quraysh have withheld the caliphate from the Prophet's Household, despite ʿAlī being the first to believe, the Prophet's cousin, the most knowledgeable of the people, the most learned in God's religion, the one who endured the greatest hardships for Islam, and the one most capable of guiding them to the straight path. By God, they have taken the caliphate away from a rightly guided guide. They neither sought the welfare of the community nor chose the correct path; rather, they preferred this world over the Hereafter."[7]

Al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad consistently opposed ʿUthmān's policies. One night, as ʿUthmān finished the ʿIshā prayer in the Prophet's Mosque (*al-Masjid al-Nabawī*) and was on his way home, a person walked ahead of him carrying a lamp. Al-Miqdād strongly objected to this act, deeming it heretical (*bidʿa*).[8] He was also among the Prophet's companions who wrote a letter to the caliph, criticizing his actions and listing matters in which he had deviated from the tradition (*sunna*) of the Prophet (s).[9] When ʿUbayd Allāh, the son of ʿUmar, killed Hurmuzān—one of the Persians residing in Medina—in retaliation for his father's death,[10] ʿUthmān delayed in carrying out his retaliation (*qiṣāṣ*)

1. Rāzī, Tārīkh madīnat Ṣanʿā', 120.
2. Wāqiqdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 1: 174.
3. Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 155.
4. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥu Miṣr wa l-maghrib*, 83; Ṣadafī, *Tārīkh Ibn Yūnus*, 1: 483.
5. See Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimishq*, 39: 242.
6. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 232-33.
7. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 163; see also Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 3: 931.
8. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 163.
9. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 539; see also Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 51.
10. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 271.

and ultimately sent ʿUbayd Allāh to Kufa without punishing him. Al-Miqdād did not remain silent in the face of this behavior and openly voiced his objections.[1]

Eventually, al-Miqdād passed away in his home in al-Jurf region. His body was brought to Medina, where he was buried in al-Baqīʿ.[2] While many sources report that ʿUthmān led the funeral prayer for al-Miqdād, al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 292/905) reports that before his death, al-Miqdād had instructed in his will that ʿAmmār b. Yāsir should lead the prayer. Accordingly, ʿAmmār performed the prayer without informing ʿUthmān, which angered the caliph greatly upon learning of it.[3] In another account, it is mentioned that after al-Miqdād's death, ʿUthmān praised him and wept for him. Observing this, al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām recited a verse implying: "Do not cry for me after my death when you denied me my rights during my life."[4] Another report states that, before his death, al-Miqdād had willed that 8,000 dirhams from his wealth be given to each of Imam al-Ḥasan and Imam al-Ḥusayn (a).[5]

It is narrated from Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī that he asked the Prophet (s) about al-Miqdād. The Prophet (s) replied: "He is one of us. Whoever harbors enmity toward him, God will harbor enmity toward them; and whoever loves him, God will love them."[6] Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) interpreted the verse, "They were guided to chaste belief, and guided to the path of the All-laudable" (Q 22:24), as referring to a group of individuals, including al-Miqdād, who were guided to the guardianship of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ʿAlī (a).[7] Al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad is described as one of the most faithful individuals.[8] Furthermore, he is among those identified as destined to return (*rajʿa*) during the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdī (a) and to participate in his uprising.[9]

Salmān al-Fārsī (d. 35/656)

His pre-Islamic name is said to have been Mābih, the son of Būdakhshān. He was of Persian origin and is believed to have descended from a king named Āb in Persia. His birthplace is identified as either Ramhormoz or the village of Jayān/Jay in Isfahan.[10] The

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 163-64.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 205.
3. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 171.
4. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 121; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 60: 181-82.
5. Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ*, 1: 83.
6. Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 223.
7. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 426.
8. Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 11.
9. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 2: 386.
10. Abū Nuʿaym, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 455; see also Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 2: 196.

exact date of Salmān's birth is unknown, but he is counted among those who lived an exceptionally long life, with some reports estimating his age to have been 250 or even 350 years.[1] There is also some disagreement regarding the date of his death, though the year 35/656, corresponding to the final year of the caliphate of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, appears to be the most accurate.[2]

During the Prophetic Era

Salmān was the first Persian to embrace Islam, which is why the Prophet (s) referred to him as "the first Persian" (*Sābiq Fāris*/*Sābiq al-Furs*).[3] In one report, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās narrates the story of Salmān's search for truth and his conversion to Islam. Salmān was the son of a Persian village chief (*Dihqān*), and his father, out of deep affection, did not allow him to leave the house. As a result, Salmān was only familiar with Zoroastrianism and was diligent in maintaining the sacred fire of his father's fire temple. Eventually, when his father sent him to oversee the work of laborers, he passed by a church. Witnessing the worship of the Christian monks, he was captivated by it and embraced Christianity. Salmān fled his home at night and set out for the Levant, and served under several monks and ascetics in the Levant, Mosul, and Nusaybin,[4] accompanying each until their deaths. Each time one of his mentors was on their deathbed, Salmān would ask about another devout monk to whom he could turn for guidance. Eventually, he went to a monk in Amorium (*ʿAmmūriya*).[5] When this monk was near death, he informed Salmān of the imminent advent of a Prophet (s) in the land of the Arabs and advised him to migrate to the Hijaz, specifically to a region abundant with date palms. The monk described the signs of the Arab Prophet (s): he would not consume alms, accept gifts, and bear the seal of Prophethood between his shoulders. Salmān prepared for his journey and joined a caravan heading to the ARabīʿan Peninsula. However, in Wādī al-Qurā,[6] his companions betrayed him, seized his belongings, and sold him as a slave to a Jewish man residing in the area. Salmān spent some time in Wādī al-Qurā before being sold again to another Jewish man from the Banū Qurayẓa tribe, who brought him to Yathrib (Medina).

1. Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-Ghāba*, 2: 269.
2. See Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Ṭabaqāt*, 33; Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 2: 638.
3. See Maʿmar b. Rāshid, *Jāmiʿ*, 11: 242; Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil*, 2: 167.
4. A city located in the al-Jazīra region, in northern Iraq and present-day Turky (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 5: 288).
5. A city located in the presentday Turky (Ibid., 4: 158).
6. A region in the northern Hijaz (Ibid., 2: 67).

In Yathrib, Salmān heard about the Prophethood of Muḥammad (a) and learned of his migration to the city. He gathered some dates and brought them to the Prophet (s), presenting them as alms (*ṣadaqa*). The Prophet (s) refrained from eating them, and Salmān recognized the first sign mentioned by the monk in Amorium. On another occasion, Salmān brought dates to the Prophet (s) as a gift, and this time the Prophet (s) accepted and ate them. Now, only one sign remained for Salmān to confirm—seeing the mark of Prophethood between the Prophet's shoulders. One day, while the Prophet (s) was attending a funeral, his cloak slipped off, revealing the mark on his shoulder. Salmān, overcome with emotion, wept and approached the Prophet (s). He recounted his story and embraced Islam.[1]

Since Salmān was a slave, he was unable to participate in the battles of Badr and Uḥud in 2/624 and 3/625, respectively.[2] On the advice of the Prophet (s), he entered into a manumission agreement (*mukātaba*) with his owner. With the help of the Prophet (s) and the Muslim community, he secured his freedom before the Battle of al-Aḥzāb (the Trench) and was able to participate in it.[3] Salmān played a significant role in both the Battle of al-Aḥzāb in 5/627 and the Siege of Taif in 8/630. At his suggestion, a trench was dug along the northern edge of Medina to defend the city during the Battle of al-Aḥzāb. This was the first time such a tactic had been used in the warfare of the Arabs.[4] During the Siege of Taif, Salmān constructed a catapult for the Muslim forces to breach the fortress of Taif.[5] This catapult was the first of its kind built and utilized in Islamic history.[6]

Many hadiths have been recorded from the Prophet (s) regarding Salmān's virtues. The Prophet (s) said to Salmān: "O Salmān, you are one of us, the Ahl al-Bayt. God has bestowed upon you the knowledge of the first and the last, and the Book of the first and the last."[7] Salmān is also counted among the four individuals whom God loves and has commanded His Prophet (s) to love.[8] In another hadith, the Prophet (s) stated: "Indeed, Paradise longs for three individuals: ʿAlī, ʿAmmār, and Salmān."[9]

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1. See Ibn Isḥāq, K. al-Siyar wa al-maghazī,
2. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 4: 60.
3. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 220-21; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 271.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 343.
5. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghazī*. 3: 927.
6. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 2: 483.
7. Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Āḥād wa l-mathānī*, 5: 170; Ibn Abī Khaythama, *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*, 1: 263.
8. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 38: 67.
9. Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, 6: 141.

During the Caliphs' Era

Salmān was not only among the transmitters of the hadith of Ghadīr and knew about ʿAlī's (a) succession after the Prophet (s),[1] but also, as some hadiths indicate, was informed of ʿAlī's designation as the Prophet's successor (*waṣī*) directly by the Prophet (s) before his passing.[2] This may explain why Salmān was among those who objected to Abū Bakr's caliphate. Many sources list Salmān among the opponents of Abū Bakr's election.[3] Upon learning of Abū Bakr's selection at Saqīfa Banū Sāʿida, he openly voiced his dissent, saying: "What a thing you have done, and what a thing you have left undone! By God, if they had pledged allegiance to ʿAlī, they would have eaten [of divine blessings] from above their heads and beneath their feet."[4] He is also identified as one of those who sought to overturn the decision made at Saqīfa.[5] Salmān was among the three individuals who, at ʿAlī's invitation and in a display of their sincerity and support, presented themselves to him with shaved heads.[6] He was also one of the few present during the secret burial of Lady Fāṭima (a).[7]

Between 16-19/637–640, Salmān al-Fārsī was appointed as the governor of Madain (Madain), a position he held until his death.[8] Historical reports suggest that Salmān was reluctant to accept this role, and ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him under duress.[9] As governor, Salmān differed greatly from many other officials of his time. He donated his governmental gifts as charity and sustained himself through his own labor. Numerous accounts describe him earning a living by weaving and selling wicker. He refused to sit on a throne or wear luxurious clothing.[10] These characteristics, along with his piety and asceticism, led to his being counted among the devout and ascetic figures of his era.[11] Salmān passed away in Madain, where he was also buried.[12] According to some hadiths,

1. Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 1: 107-8.
2. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Baḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 615.
3. Barqī, *K. al-Rijāl*, 63; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 588; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 124.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 591; see also Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 7: 443.
5. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 220.
6. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 32-33.
7. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 115.
8. Salmān's appointment as governor of Madain by ʿUmar is said to have occurred shortly before the Battle of Jalawlāʾ. Some sources date this battle to 16/637 (Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 259), while others place it in 19/640 (Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 151).
9. See Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 21: 435; Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām*, 1: 547.
10. See Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 4: 64-68.
11. Abū Nuʿaym, *Ḥulyat al-awliyāʾ*, 1: 185.
12. Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 5: 75.

Imam ʿAlī (a), through miraculous means, was present at Salmān's bedside, performed the funeral prayer, and personally buried him.[1]

Numerous hadiths from the Ahl al-Bayt (a) have been narrated regarding Salmān's virtues. When Imam ʿAlī (a) was asked about him, he said: "He possessed the knowledge of the first and the last. He was like an unending sea. He is one of us, the Ahl al-Bayt."[2] Imam al-Sajjād (a) stated about Salmān: "The knowledge of scholars is firm and weighty, and it cannot be borne except by divine messengers, close angels, or a believer whose heart God has tested. Indeed, Salmān was among such scholars because he was one of us, the Ahl al-Bayt."[3] Imam al-Bāqir (a) described Salmān as one of those through whom God's blessings are bestowed.[4] Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) counted him among the seven individuals who fulfilled and remained loyal to the command in the *al-Mawadda* Verse (Q 42:23).[5] Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) also described Salmān as a *muḥaddath*—one who receives inspiration from angels.[6] According to another hadith from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), Salmān was among those who possessed knowledge of God's Greatest Name (*al-Ism al-Aʿẓam*).[7]

Zayd b. Ṣūḥān (d. 36/565)

His name was Zayd b. Ṣūḥān b. Ḥajar al-ʿAbdī, and he belonged to the Banū ʿAbd al-Qays tribe. Some sources count him among the Companions of the Prophet (s). He was certainly a Muslim during the Prophet's lifetime, and according to some reports, he traveled with his tribe to Medina in 9/631 to declare his conversion to Islam to the Prophet (s). Zayd, along with his brothers Ṣaʿṣaʿa and Sīḥān, was among the loyal companions of Imam ʿAlī (a). Known for his piety, asceticism, and knowledge, Zayd was martyred in 36/656 during the Battle of Jamal, fighting alongside Imam ʿAlī (a).[8]

During the Prophetic Era

Regarding Zayd's life in the Prophetic era, limited information is available. In a hadith, the Prophet (s) said about Zayd b. Ṣūḥān: "Whoever wishes to look upon someone whose

1. Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 301-2.
2. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 365.
3. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 401.
4. Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 5.
5. Ḥimyarī, *Qurb al-Isnād*, 79.
6. Ṣaffār, *Baṣā'ir*, 322.
7. Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 13.
8. See Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 2: 555-56; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 19: 429; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 2: 139; ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, 2: 517, 532.

parts of his body will enter Paradise before him, let him look at Zayd b. Ṣūḥān."[1] According to some reports, Zayd participated in the Battle of Muʾta, where one of his hands was severed during the conflict.[2]

During the Caliphs' Era

Historical sources provide no information about Zayd's life during the caliphate of Abū Bakr. Similarly, there are limited historical details about him during the reign of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. According to some reports, it appears that Zayd b. Ṣūḥān participated in the Battle of Jalūlāʾ in 16/635, during which he lost one of his hands.[3] He later arrived in Kufa as one of its prominent figures and was highly honored by the caliph.[4]

The name of Zayd b. Ṣūḥān is recorded among those who opposed the policies of ʿUthmān.[5] According to one report, Zayd traveled from Kufa to Medina to advise ʿUthmān, but the caliph decided to exile him along with a group of Kufa's prominent figures to the Levant.[6] He was one of the leading Kufan dissidents who went to Medina and played a role in the widespread protests against ʿUthmān's policies, which ultimately led to the caliph's assassination.[7] However, there is no information regarding his direct involvement in inciting the protesters' anger or his presence during ʿUthmān's murder.

During Imam ʿAlī's Reign

The name of Zayd b. Ṣūḥān is mentioned among those who pledged allegiance to Imam ʿAlī (a) in Medina.[8] He was among those whom ʿĀʾisha wrote to before initiating the Battle of Jamal, inviting them to join her cause. However, Zayd responded by warning ʿĀʾisha against this action and declared his loyalty to the Commander of the Faithful Imam ʿAlī (a).[9] He also actively encouraged the people of Kufa to join Imam ʿAlī's army, countering the reluctance of Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī in mobilizing troops. During these events, Zayd addressed the people, saying: "O people, hasten to the Commander of the Faithful, and you will surely find the truth."[10]

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1. Abū Yaʿlā al-Mawṣilī, *Musnad*, 1: 266; Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawāʾid*, 6: 398; see also ʿAsqslānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, 5: 92.
2. Ṭabarī al-Āmulī al-Kabīr, *al-Mustarshid*, 660.
3. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 176; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, 402.
4. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 176.
5. Ṭabrī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 326, 403.
6. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 177; see also Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 532.
7. Muskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, 1: 439-40.
8. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 104.
9. Ṭabrī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 476-77.
10. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 460.

Zayd, accompanied by ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās and on behalf of Imam ʿAlī (a), was sent to ʿĀ'isha. Their mission was to invite her to repentance and dissuade her from engaging in battle. However, ʿĀ'isha, acknowledging her inability to withstand ʿAlī's reasoning, sent them back to him.[1] Zayd b. Ṣūḥān was tasked with leading the Banū ʿAbd al-Qays tribe on the battlefield and served as their standard-bearer.[2]

During the Battle of Jamal, Zayd declared himself as a follower of ʿAlī's faith in a battle cry during an overt clash.[3] Ultimately, he and his brother Sīḥān were martyred by ʿAmr b. Yathribī.[4] Imam ʿAlī (a), the Commander of the Faithful, visited Zayd when he was on the verge of death and said, "O Zayd, may God encompass you in His mercy. You were low in cost yet abundant in benefit." Zayd replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, may God reward you. I have known you only as one endowed with profound knowledge of God, described as exalted and wise in the Quran, with God having an esteemed status in your heart. By God, I have not fought beside you in ignorance. I heard from Umm Salama, the wife of the Messenger of God (a), who said that she heard the Messenger of God (a) declare: 'Whoever considers me his guardian, then ʿAlī is his guardian. O God, be the guardian of whoever takes him as guardian, and oppose whoever opposes him. Support those who support him, and abandon those who forsake him.' By God, I could not bear to abandon helping you and incur God's forsaking."[5] It is reported that before his martyrdom, Zayd requested that his body not be washed of blood nor the garments in which he was martyred removed, as he intended to present them as evidence on the Day of Resurrection.[6]

Abū l-Haytham b. al-Tayyihān (d. 37/657)

His name was Mālik b. al-Tayyihān, and he belonged to the Banū ʿAbd al-Ashhal clan of the Aws tribe. He was among the prominent figures of Yathrib who embraced Islam during the events at ʿAqaba. Mālik was one of those who pledged allegiance to the Prophet (s) and vowed to protect the Prophet (s) with their lives. Notably, during the ʿAqaba event, he was the first to pledge allegiance to the Prophet (s). Abū l-Haytham, the senior figure of Banū ʿAbd al-Ashhal, stood by the Prophet (s) in all of the Prophet's

1. Ibid., 2: 467.
2. Fasawī, *al-Maʿrifa wa l-tārīkh*, 3: 312; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 2: 139.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 244; Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 345-46.
4. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, 402.
5. Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 79.
6. Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, 3: 542, 5: 273; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 2: 457-58.

battles, including Badr and Uḥud. Mālik was a companion of Imam ʿAlī (a) and was martyred in the Battle of Ṣiffīn in 37/657.[1]

During the Prophetic Era

It is reported that before the advent of Islam, Mālik b. al-Tayyihān had abandoned idolatry and adopted monotheism.[2] Abū l-Haytham was among those present at both the first and second pledges at ʿAqaba, playing a key role in facilitating the Prophet's migration to Medina.[3] He was counted among the twelve leaders and notable figures of Medina.[4] According to some accounts, he was the first person to pledge allegiance to the Prophet (s).[5]

During the pact of brotherhood, the Prophet (s) established a bond of brotherhood between Abū l-Haytham b. al-Tayyihān and ʿUthmān b. Maẓʿūn.[6] Mālik participated in all of the Prophet's battles, and his brother was martyred during the Battle of Uḥud.[7] During the Battle of Khaybar, Abū l-Haytham was entrusted with assessing the lands and the date harvests of the Khaybarites to distribute them among the Muslims.[8]

During the Caliphs' Era

The name of Abū l-Haytham b. al-Tayyihān is mentioned among those who opposed the selection of Abū Bakr as caliph.[9] Al-Barqī (d. ?) includes him among the twelve individuals from the Muhājirūn and Anṣār who resisted Abū Bakr's caliphate.[10] Additionally, he is noted as one of those who sought to transfer the matter of caliphate to a council, in opposition to Abū Bakr's appointment.[11] During this period, when Abū Bakr proposed that he resume his previous role of estimating the yield of date palms, a duty he had undertaken during the Prophet's time, Abū l-Haytham refused the offer.[12] A sermon attributed to him concerning the apostasy of certain Hijazi tribes and their acceptance of the claims of false Prophets has also been reported, which could be

1. See Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 4: 238-39; Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām*, 1: 189-91; ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, 7: 365-66.
2. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 341.
3. Ibid., 1: 172; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 329; Bayhaqī, *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, 2: 430.
4. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 433.
5. Ibid., 1: 447; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 172.
6. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 271.
7. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 2: 123.
8. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 2: 691, 707.
9. Jawharī, *al-Saqīfa wa Fadak*, 46; Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 2: 461.
10. Barqī, *K. al-Rijāl*, 63.
11. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 220, 2: 51-52.
12. Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām*, 1: 191.

interpreted as a subtle endorsement of ʿAlī's rightful claim to the caliphate. In it, the prevention of apostasy was deemed more crucial than engaging in disputes over the caliphate.[1] Historical and hadith sources provide no information about Abū l-Haytham b. al-Tayyihān's life or interactions during the reigns of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān.

During Imam ʿAlī's Reign

Abū l-Haytham was among those who delivered speeches encouraging the people to pledge allegiance to Imam ʿAlī (a). His remarks highlighted the virtues, superiority, and scholarly qualification of the Commander of the Faithful (a) for the position of caliphate.[2] He, along with Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, ensured the Anṣār's allegiance to Imam ʿAlī (a).[3] According to one report, Imam ʿAlī (a) entrusted Abū l-Haytham, alongside ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, with overseeing the public treasury (*Bayt al-Māl*) in Medina. He advised them to distribute the wealth equally among the Muslims.[4]

Ibn al-Tayyihān was among the first to respond to Imam ʿAlī's (a) call to arms for the Battle of Jamal.[5] He delivered a speech in support of Imam ʿAlī (a) during the mobilization of forces, in which he referenced the Quraysh's envy toward the Imam (a) and expressed his loyalty through poetic verses.[6] According to some reports, Abū l-Haytham was one of those who, before the outbreak of military conflicts during the Battle of Jamal, sought to dissuade Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr from engaging in battle. During this meeting, he reminded them of their involvement in the shedding of ʿUthmān's blood and the events leading to his assassination.[7]

Abū l-Haytham played an active role on the battlefield during the Battle of Ṣiffīn. While organizing the ranks of the Iraqi soldiers, he addressed them, saying: "O people of Iraq, truly, only half a day separates you from swift victory or the Paradise that awaits you. Stand firm, maintain the order of your ranks, surrender your lives to God, and seek His aid. Strive in jihad against your enemies and the enemies of God. 'The earth indeed

1. See Wāqidī, *al-Ridda*, 29-30.
2. See Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 435.
3. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 178.
4. See Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 152.
5. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 447.
6. Mufīd, *al-Amālī*, 155.
7. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 730.

belongs to Allah, and He gives its inheritance to whomever He wishes of His servants, and the outcome will be in favour of the Godwary' (Q 7:128)."[1]

In the midst of the battle, ʿAmmār b. Yāsir entered the field and cried out, "O people, who will enter Paradise?" At that moment, several of ʿAlī's companions, including Abū l-Haytham, rose and joined ʿAmmār.[2] When Ibn al-Tayyihān witnessed ʿAmmār's martyrdom, he charged into the battlefield. Reciting battle cries about obedience to God and supporting the faith, he fought with his sword until he attained martyrdom.[3]

According to some sources, when Imam ʿAlī's close companions, including Abū l-Haytham b. al-Tayyihān, were martyred during the Battle of Ṣiffīn, calls for arbitration arose within the Iraqi army.[4] In a sermon delivered in Kufa after the Battle of Ṣiffīn, Imam ʿAlī (a) lamented the loss of his true companions who had attained martyrdom. Recalling figures such as ʿAmmār and Ibn al-Tayyihān, he said: "Where are my brothers who rode on the high road and trod the track of right? Where is ʿAmmār, where is Ibn al-Tayyihān, where is Dhū al-Shahādatayn? Where are their peers, their brothers, who pledged to fight to the death?"[5]

Uways al-Qaranī (d. 37/657)

His name was Uways b. ʿĀmir. He was from the region of Qaran in Yemen and belonged to the Banū Murād tribe. Although he is mentioned among the Companions, all sources agree that he did not meet the Prophet (s).[6] The sources mention the Prophet's foretelling about Uways, which is considered one of his miracles.[7] Additionally, hadith collections include hadiths from the Prophet (s) regarding the virtues of Uways al-Qaranī.[8] He is mentioned as one of the devout worshippers and ascetics, and in Shiite sources, he is counted among the "Eight Ascetics" (*Zuhhād*) who were companions of Imam ʿAlī (a).[9] Numerous accounts in the sources highlight Uways's asceticism.[10] He was martyred in 37/657 during the Battle of Ṣiffīn.[11] His grave is located in Raqqa in present-day Syria,

1. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 5: 190.
2. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 146.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 319; Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 3: 180.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 360.
5. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 182.
6. See Abū Nuʿaym, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥhba*, 1: 289; Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 4: 331; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 1: 179.
7. See e.g., Bahaqī, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, 6: 375-78.
8. See e.g., Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4: 1968-69; Ḥākim al-Nasābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 455-61.
9. Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 97.
10. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Zuhd*, 277-81.
11. Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Ṭabaqāt*, 246.

though other burial sites attributed to him exist in Alexandria, Egypt, and Diyarbakır, Turkey.[1]

During the Caliphs' Era

Uways al-Qaranī resided in Yemen during the events following the Prophet's demise and throughout Abū Bakr's caliphate; he was not present in Medina during this time. Based on historical evidence, it appears that he migrated to Kufa after the city's establishment during the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.[2] ʿUmar, having heard descriptions of Uways from the Prophet (s), frequently inquired about him from Yemenis visiting Medina or those from Yemen who had settled in Kufa and traveled back and forth to Medina.[3] Uways likely remained in Kufa after ʿUmar's era and during the caliphate of ʿUthmān, leading a life of asceticism and seclusion. This might explain why little is mentioned about him during this period.

During Imam ʿAlī's Reign

Uways al-Qaranī is counted among the prominent Shia (followers) of ʿAlī (a).[4] He has at times been regarded as one of the close companions of the Imam (a)[5] and, at other times, introduced as one of his disciples.[6] According to some hadiths, Uways is among the *tābiʿūn* (companions of companions) to whom the Prophet (s) (a) gave the glad tidings of Paradise.[7] Based on hadiths and historical accounts, Uways pledged allegiance to the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ʿAlī (a), prior to the Battle of Jamal. When Imam ʿAlī (a) renewed the allegiance with his companions in Dhū Qār, Uways pledged allegiance to him. The Imam (a) asked him, "What do you pledge allegiance for?" He replied, "To listen to you and obey you, and to fight ahead of you until either death overtakes me or God grants you victory."[8]

Uways was among those who pledged allegiance to Imam ʿAlī (a) before the Battle of Ṣiffīn, vowing to fight to the death.[9] His virtues and merits, as narrated from the Prophet (s), were so renowned that during the battle, a man from the Levantine army called out,

1. Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 2: 468.
2. See Ibn al-Mubārak, *Musnad*, 18-19.
3. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 204-5; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 9: 416-17.
4. Ṭabarī al-Āmulī al-Kabīr, *al-Mustarshid*, 192.
5. Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 7.
6. Ibid., 61.
7. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 19: 442.
8. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 316.
9. Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 98.

"Is Uways al-Qaranī among you?" Upon receiving an affirmative response, he said, "I heard the Messenger of God (a) say, 'Truly, among the best of the companions of my companions is Uways al-Qaranī.'" The man then urged his horse forward and joined Imam ʿAlī's army.[1] Uways, carrying a bow in hand, approached the Commander of the Faithful (a) to bid him farewell. He then advanced to the battlefield alongside the infantry of the Rabīʿa tribe. Not long after, he was martyred. Imam ʿAlī (a) led the funeral prayer over him and buried him.[2]

ʿAmmār b. Yāsir (d. 37/657)

His full name was ʿAmmār b. Yāsir b. Mālik. He traced his lineage to the Yemeni tribe of Madhḥij and was an ally of the Banū Makhzūm. Alongside his father, mother, and brother, ʿAmmār was among the earliest converts to Islam and endured torture at the hands of the polytheists for his faith. He migrated to Abyssinia, was among the Emigrants to Medina, and participated in all of the Prophet's (a) battles. Numerous hadiths have been narrated from the Prophet (s) regarding ʿAmmār's virtues. ʿAmmār was regarded as one of the close companions of Imam ʿAlī (a) and held responsibilities during the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. He was martyred in 37/657 during the Battle of Ṣiffīn. His martyrdom created significant challenges for the Levantine forces, as the Prophet (s) had described his killers as "the rebellious faction (*al-fi'a al-bāghiya*)."[3]

During the Prophetic Era

ʿAmmār b. Yāsir was among the earliest individuals to embrace Islam in Mecca, being counted as one of the first thirty-plus converts.[4] He was also among the first to publicly declare his faith in Mecca.[5] ʿAmmār and his family were tortured by the polytheists due to their conversion to Islam. During these tortures, his mother, Sumayya, was martyred, earning the title of the first martyr in the cause of Islam.[6] According to some reports, ʿAmmār was among those who migrated to Abyssinia in 5/615. However, he returned to

1. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 205; Ḥākim al-Nasābūrī, *al-Mustdrak*, 3: 455.
2. Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 3: 177.
3. See Ibn Isḥāq, *K. al-Siyar wa l-maghāzī*, 192; Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 3: 1135-41, 4: 1588-89; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 3: 626-32.
4. Ibn Isḥāq, K. *al-Siyar wa l-maghāzī*, 144; Balādhurī, Ansāb al-ashrāf, 1: 158.
5. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 158.
6. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 28.

Mecca after a few months following rumors of the Meccans' conversion to Islam.[1] He is also regarded as one of the earliest emigrants to Medina.[2]

ʿAmmār is regarded as the first person in Islam to have constructed a mosque.[3] This claim is based on the Prophet's building of the Qubā' Mosque following ʿAmmār's suggestion.[4] He also played a significant role in the construction of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. During its construction, the Prophet (s) informed ʿAmmār that he would ultimately be killed by "the rebellious faction (*al-fi'a al-bāghiya*)."[5] At the same time, when ʿUthmān threatened ʿAmmār over a poem that ʿAmmār recited repeatedly and which was directed at him, the Prophet (s) expressed his displeasure, saying, "What do they want from ʿAmmār? He invites them to Paradise, while they call him to Hell. Truly, ʿAmmār is [as close and dear to me] as the skin of my face."[6]

The Prophet (s) held great affection for ʿAmmār. When ʿAmmār sought permission to enter the Prophet's presence, he would say, "Grant him permission. Welcome, O pure and fragrant one!"[7] The Prophet (s) also said about him, "ʿAmmār b. Yāsir is filled with faith to his very core."[8] In another instance, the Prophet (s) remarked, "Whenever two options are presented to the son of Sumayya [ʿAmmār], he always chooses the better of the two."[9] Numerous hadiths have been narrated from the Prophet (s) regarding ʿAmmār in the ḥadīth sources.[10]

During the Caliphs' Era

ʿAmmār b. Yāsir is considered among those who opposed Abū Bakr's succession of the Prophet (s).[11] According to some reports, he also delivered speeches in defense of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib's rightful claim to the caliphate.[12] During this period, when a group of over sixty people declared their support for Imam ʿAlī (a), the Imam requested that, if they were sincere and steadfast in their commitment, they should gather the next morning with

1. Ibn Isḥāq, *K. al-Siyar wa l-maghāzī*, 177.
2. Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmāʿ*, 1: 56.
3. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 498.
4. Suhaylī, *al-Rawḍ al-unuf*, 4: 163.
5. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 496-97.
6. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 497-98; Diyārbakrī, *Tārīkh al-khamīs*, 1: 345.
7. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 385.
8. Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 7: 358.
9. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 6: 220.
10. See e.g., Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6: 385-86; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 857-61.
11. Barqī, *K. al-Rijāl*, 63-66; Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 1: 461; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 124.
12. Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 1: 178.

shaved heads. Among them, only three or four complied, and ʿAmmār was one of them.[1] Some accounts also mention that ʿAmmār participated in the Wars of Apostasy (*Ḥurūb al-Ridda*) against those claiming Prophethood and took part in the Battle of Yamāma in 12/633 during Abū Bakr's caliphate.[2]

During the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿAmmār cooperated more closely with the government. He participated in the battles of Jalūlāʾ and the conquests of Shushtar and Nahavand, serving as a military commander in some of these battles.[3] Additionally, ʿAmmār served as the governor of Kufa between 21–22/641–642.[4]

During the formation of the six-member council to select a caliph after the death of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿAmmār openly declared his support for ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a).[5] He was one of the principal critics of ʿUthmān's policies, frequently addressing and criticizing his actions in the mosque of Medina.[6] According to one report, ʿAmmār said in the mosque in support of ʿAlī (a): "O assembly of the Quraysh! You have repeatedly removed [the caliphate] from the family of your Prophet (s). By God, I hope that God will take it away from you and place it among others, just as you took it away from its rightful people."[7]

When ʿUthmān declared from the mosque pulpit that he could take as much as he wished from the Muslim treasury, he faced strong opposition from ʿAmmār. In response, ʿUthmān ordered his soldiers to arrest him. The caliph's soldiers beat ʿAmmār so severely that he lost consciousness. This incident intensified public outcry against ʿUthmān's conduct, prompting even ʿĀʾisha and Umm Salama, the Prophet's wives, to voice their objections.[8] The Banū Makhzūm tribe, with whom ʿAmmār was allied, also joined the growing wave of dissent due to the caliph's treatment of him.[9]

When Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī was exiled to al-Rabadha by the caliph ʿUthmān due to his criticism of the caliph's policies, ʿAmmār, along with the Commander of the Faithful (a), was among those who escorted him.[10] After news of Abū Dharr's death in exile reached Medina, ʿAmmār once again criticized the caliph. When ʿUthmān heard of ʿAmmār's remarks, he sought to exile him as well, but Imam ʿAlī (a) and the Banū

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 32-34; see also Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 126.
2. See Wāqidī, *al-Ridda*, 123; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 3: 580.
3. See Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 129, 130, 134.
4. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 3: 20, 31.
5. Maqdisī, *al-Badʾ wa l-tārīkh*, 5: 191.
6. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, 257.
7. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 343.
8. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 538.
9. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 338.
10. See Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 171-73.

Makhzūm tribe intervened to prevent it.[1] ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd, having been injured in an attack by ʿUthmān's supporters, leading to his death, instructed that ʿAmmār b. Yāsir lead his funeral prayer and that his burial take place without the caliph's knowledge. Upon learning of this, ʿUthmān expressed his disapproval, but ʿAmmār explained that the burial had been in accordance with Ibn Masʿūd's will, as he did not wish the caliph to attend his funeral.[2]

When opposition to ʿUthmān intensified in Medina, he sent a group to negotiate with ʿAmmār in an attempt to quell the people's anger, but ʿAmmār refused.[3] ʿAmmār's opposition to ʿUthmān was so well-known that, according to some reports, he was one of the individuals the Egyptians hoped would join their cause.[4] Although ʿAmmār initially aligned himself with the Egyptians, he changed his stance after hearing the words of Imam ʿAlī (a).[5] Despite ʿAmmār's initial refusal to mediate between the protestors and ʿUthmān,[6] it appears that he refrained from public opposition and inciting dissent against the caliph after listening to ʿAlī (a). Evidence for this claim lies in the absence of historical reports mentioning ʿAmmār's presence during the final days of ʿUthmān's life or his involvement in the heightening protests against him, as recorded in historical sources.

During Imam ʿAlī's Reign

ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, who had been a staunch supporter of ʿAlī's rightful claim to the caliphate from the beginning, played a significant role in the public pledge of allegiance to him after ʿUthmān's assassination. He was among those who immediately approached ʿAlī (a), urging him to accept their allegiance.[7] To encourage others to pledge allegiance to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), ʿAmmār delivered a sermon highlighting the virtues and merits of Imam ʿAlī (a).[8] On the day following ʿUthmān's assassination, ʿAmmār was among the first to pledge allegiance to ʿAlī (a).[9]

When Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī, the governor of Kufa, refused to mobilize troops for participation in the Battle of Jamal, ʿAmmār, who was in Kufa at the time, delivered a

1. Ibid., 2: 173.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 525.
3. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 409.
4. Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 3: 441.
5. See Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 549, 551.
6. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 7: 170-71.
7. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 206; Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 128.
8. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 7: 36.
9. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 22-3.

sermon condemning the people of Jamal as sinful oath-breakers. He attempted to encourage the people to join the battle,[1] but his efforts proved unsuccessful. ʿAmmār then went to ʿAlī (a) and reported the situation. The Commander of the Faithful (a) sent Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and ʿAmmār to Kufa to gather troops and persuade the people to join the fight against the people of Jamal.[2] According to some reports, ʿAmmār delivered a second sermon to the people of Kufa, in which he highlighted the treachery of those leading the Battle of Jamal, their involvement in the assassination of ʿUthmān, and the fact that Imam ʿAlī (a) and his supporters had no part in those events.[3]

ʿAmmār was one of the commanders in Imam ʿAlī's army during the Battle of Jamal.[4] He fought valiantly on the battlefield, defeating many of the bravest warriors from the opposing forces.[5] When the camel carrying ʿĀ'isha was brought down and the soldiers began to flee, ʿAmmār, along with Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, removed her howdah and set it on the ground. ʿAlī (a) then instructed them to escort her to Basra.[6]

When Muʿāwiya refused to step down from the governorship of the Levant and demanded retribution for ʿUthmān's blood, Imam ʿAlī (a), after consulting with several individuals, including ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, decided to confront him militarily. During this meeting, ʿAmmār declared his readiness to face Muʿāwiya in battle.[7] When the two armies reached the plains of Ṣiffīn, Imam ʿAlī (a) organized his forces and appointed commanders for various divisions. ʿAmmār b. Yāsir was appointed as the commander of the cavalry.[8]

The battle dragged on, with each commander taking turns leading their respective army each day. On the third day of the battle, ʿAmmār led the Iraqi forces, while ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ commanded the Levantine army.[9] Amid the heat of the battle, ʿAmmār cried out: "O Lord, You know that if I knew Your satisfaction lay in throwing myself into the sea, I would do so. O God, You know well that if I knew Your satisfaction lay in pressing the edge of my sword against my chest and driving it through my heart until it emerged from my back, I would do so. O Lord, from what You have taught me, I know that nothing is

1. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 85; Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 359.
2. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 86-87.
3. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 246.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 239.
5. See Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 477-78.
6. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 533; Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 382.
7. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 92-93.
8. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 171.
9. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 303.

more pleasing to You than striving against these transgressors. And if there were an action more pleasing to You, I would have done it."[1]

It was midday, and ʿAmmār was deeply engaged in the battle. Addressing his comrades, he said: "O people, who among you will rush toward Paradise like a thirsty person toward water? By God, Paradise lies beneath the shadows of spears. Today, I will meet my beloved ones: Muḥammad (a) and his companions. O Muslims, observe God's right regarding these people [the Levant's army], for they are the children of the polytheist factions who entered this religion unwillingly, only after sharp swords had humiliated them." With the cry, "We fought you before for the revelation of the Quran, and now we fight you for its [correct] interpretation," ʿAmmār charged into the heart of the Levant's army. He repeatedly thrust himself into the enemy ranks, continually expressing his longing to meet the Prophet (s). Suddenly, a Levantine soldier struck him, and another severed his head, martyring him.[2]

With the news of ʿAmmār's martyrdom, everyone recalled the well-known words of the Prophet (s), who had said to him: "You will be killed by the rebellious group (*al-fi'a al-bāghiya*)." This event had such a profound effect on the Levantine army that it caused them to retreat, allowing the Iraqi forces to advance. The Iraqi soldiers managed to push forward close to Muʿāwiya's encampment.[3] To absolve himself of the blame, Muʿāwiya spread a rumor among his soldiers, claiming that the one responsible for ʿAmmār's death was the person who brought him to the battlefield.[4]

When Imam ʿAlī (a), the Commander of the Faithful, stood over the blood-soaked body of ʿAmmār, he said: "Indeed, we belong to God, and to Him we shall return. Truly, if the tragedy of ʿAmmār's killing does not stir sorrow in one's heart, such a person has not even caught the scent of Islam. May God have mercy on ʿAmmār on the day he is resurrected and on the day he is questioned … Verily, Paradise became obligatory for ʿAmmār on multiple occasions; may the bliss of Paradise be his reward. He was martyred while being with the truth, and the truth was with him."[5]

Hāshim b. ʿUtba (d. 37/657)

His name is Hāshim b. ʿUtba b. Abī Waqāṣ. He was a Qurashī, tracing his lineage to the Banū Zuhra. He was a loyal companion of ʿAlī (a) and the cousin of Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ.

1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 320.
2. Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 13-14; see also Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 38-42.
3. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 188.
4. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 20: 334; see also Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 159-60.
5. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 160; see also Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 174.

Historians have listed him among the companions of the Prophet (s), noting that he embraced Islam during the conquest of Mecca in the year 8/630. However, little is known about Hāshim during the Prophetic era, with only a few narrations mentioning him. He was considered one of the bravest Arabs and was one of the first to pledge allegiance to ʿAlī (a) in Kufa. He was one of the commanders in ʿAlī's army during the Battles of Jamal and Ṣiffīn. Hāshim, who served as the standard-bearer of the Iraqi forces during the Battle of Ṣiffīn, became known as "*al-Mirqāl*" (meaning "the Swift") due to his ability to quickly maneuver the flag on the battlefield. He was martyred in the same battle in 37/657.[1]

During the Caliphs' Era

During the rule of Abū Bakr, little is known about the life of Hāshim b. ʿUtba. He was one of the commanders of the Muslim army in the Battle of Yarmūk, which took place toward the end of Abū Bakr's caliphate and the beginning of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's reign. In this battle, he lost one of his eyes.[2] During this period, Hāshim played an active role in the Islamic conquests in the Levant, particularly in the conquest of Jerusalem.[3]

During the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, Hāshim was one of the commanders of the Muslim army and, alongside his uncle Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, participated in the battles of Jalūlāʾ and several of the conquests in Persian lands.[4] Hāshim b. ʿUtba is mentioned as one of the companions of the Prophet (s) who migrated to Kufa, where he settled.[5] It is likely due to his residence in Kufa that there is no mention of Hāshim in the events that transpired in Medina during the caliphate of ʿUthmān. The only incident noted in historical sources is that, when Hāshim b. ʿUtba sighted the new moon of the Shawwāl month and broke his fast, he was punished by Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ, the caliph-appointed governor in Kufa, who had declared that day as part of Ramadan.[6] However, based on historical records, there is no evidence to classify Hāshim as one of the serious critics or opponents of ʿUthmān during that period.

1. Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 4: 1546-47; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 73: 337-41; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 4: 601-2.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 396.
3. See Wāqidī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 1: 220; Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 1: 85-86.
4. Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 139-40; Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 260-61.
5. Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 4: 1546.
6. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 10: 27.

During Imam ʿAlī's Reign

Based on historical accounts, Hāshim b. ʿUtba was in Kufa during the events leading to the assassination of ʿUthmān as well as during the general pledge of allegiance to Imam ʿAlī (a), the Commander of the Faithful. According to one report, Hāshim initially decided to support the caliphate of his uncle, Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, before inclining toward ʿAlī (a).[1] However, other accounts indicate that Hāshim was present in Kufa. He is reported to have been the first person to pledge allegiance to ʿAlī (a) upon learning of ʿUthmān's assassination and the general pledge of allegiance to ʿAlī (a). In these reports, it is stated that not only did Hāshim b. ʿUtba symbolically pledge allegiance to Imam ʿAlī (a) himself, but he also secured the allegiance of Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī, ʿUthmān's governor in Kufa, for ʿAlī (a).[2] Given these accounts, reports of Hāshim's initial support for his uncle Saʿd's caliphate may be viewed with skepticism. Hāshim b. ʿUtba is counted among the Emigrants (*Muhājirūn*) who pledged allegiance to Imam ʿAlī (a) without hesitation or doubt.[3]

Hāshim was among the Kufans who joined ʿAlī (a) at the outset of the Battle of Jamal. He joined the army of Imam ʿAlī (a) at al-Rabadha. When news of Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī's hesitation and refusal to mobilize troops reached the Imam (a), Hāshim was dispatched, along with ʿAmmār b. Yāsir and Imam al-Ḥasan (a), to Kufa to rally the people for participation in the battle.[4] During the Battle of Jamal, Hāshim served as the commander of the cavalry of the Quraysh and Kināna.[5]

Hāshim b. ʿUtba was among those whom Imam ʿAlī (a) consulted in preparation for confronting Muʿāwiya. During this meeting, Hāshim delivered a speech in which he denounced the false claims of Muʿāwiya and the Levantine people regarding avenging ʿUthmān's blood, describing them as worldly seekers motivated by personal ambitions, who should be fought against.[6] While encouraging people to join the jihad against the Levantine army, Hāshim delivered a sermon before the speeches of Imam ʿAlī (a) and Imam al-Ḥasan (a). In his address, he declared his unwavering loyalty and complete obedience to the Commander of the Faithful (a), stating: "By God, I would never desire to possess everything on earth and under the heavens if it meant I would love your enemy

1. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 20: 287.
2. See Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 213; Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 438-39.
3. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 101-4.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 234; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 499.
5. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 321.
6. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 92.

or hate your friend." After his speech, Imam ʿAlī (a) prayed: "O God, grant him martyrdom in Your path and the company of Your Messenger."[1]

Hāshim served as the standard-bearer of the Iraqi army on the battlefield and, due to his swiftness in combat, earned the title *al-Mirqāl* ("the Swift").[2] On the second day of the battle, he was appointed as the commander of the Iraqi forces, while Abū l-Aʿwar al-Sulamī led the Levant's army.[3] Hāshim al-Mirqāl, at the head of a group of soldiers, engaged the Himṣī soldiers from the Levantine army. Despite being among the elite forces of the Levant, they suffered a crushing defeat due to the perseverance and courage of Hāshim and his companions.[4] On the third day, Hāshim fought valiantly alongside ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, striking such fear into the Levantine forces that panic spread among their ranks. ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, witnessing the situation, pointed to Hāshim and said, "If the bearer of the black standard [Hāshim] continues like this, all the Arabs will be annihilated today."[5] When Muʿāwiya noticed that the standard was still in Hāshim's hands, he expressed his concern to ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, saying, "The standard is once again with Hāshim b. ʿUtba. Indeed, he wielded it swiftly before, and if he continues his assaults today, the day will become unbearably long for the Levantines."[6]

That evening, as the battle intensified, Hāshim called out, "Whoever seeks God and the Day of Judgment, come forward!" A group of soldiers gathered around him, and he charged into the battlefield. In the heat of the battle, with a loud and resolute voice, he addressed his comrades: "Do not let the endurance you see in them frighten you. It is nothing but Arab tribalism rallying around their banners and positions, yet they are undoubtedly in misguidance, while you are undoubtedly upon the truth. O people, stand firm, show patience, unite, and let us advance toward our enemy!" Among the chaos, a young Levantine soldier was cursing ʿAlī (a) while fighting fiercely. Hāshim approached him, advised him, and urged him to stop. The young Levantine justified his actions by claiming that he fought against ʿAlī (a) because, in his view, neither ʿAlī (a) nor his followers upheld prayer. Hāshim responded by highlighting the virtues of Imam ʿAlī (a), describing him as the first person to pray after the Prophet (s). He continued advising the

1. Ibid., 112.
2. Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 193, 194; Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 171.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 303.
4. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 57.
5. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 328.
6. Ibid., 340.

young man, and his words eventually had an impact. The Levantine left the battlefield and joined the ranks of Imam ʿAlī (a), the Commander of the Faithful.[1]

Hāshim b. ʿUtba, holding the standard in his hand, fought valiantly, constantly moving across the battlefield. When night fell, in the darkness, he was struck by a sword. Despite a severe wound to his abdomen, he continued fighting until he was utterly exhausted and ultimately attained martyrdom.[2] In his final moments, Hāshim instructed one of his companions to convey his greetings to the Commander of the Faithful (a). Upon hearing the news, Imam ʿAlī (a) went to the battlefield at night, retrieved Hāshim's lifeless body, and brought it back to their camp.[3] Imam ʿAlī (a) recited verses of poetry in lamentation for Hāshim b. ʿUtba.[4]

Hāshim had displayed such remarkable bravery and instilled such fear in the hearts of the Levantine army—particularly Muʿāwiya and ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ—that both harbored a deep grudge against him. After the martyrdom of Imam ʿAlī (a) and Muʿāwiya's ascension to power, Muʿāwiya wrote to his governor in Kufa, instructing him to arrest ʿAbd Allāh b. Hāshim, the son of Hāshim b. ʿUtba, and send him to Damascus. When ʿAbd Allāh arrived in Damascus, Muʿāwiya, after recounting the deeds of Hāshim during the Battle of Ṣiffīn against the Syrians, ordered that ʿAbd Allāh be imprisoned.[5]

Sahl b. Ḥunayf (d. 38/659)

His full name was Sahl b. Ḥunayf b. Wāhib, tracing his lineage to the Aws tribe. He was a companion of the Prophet (s) and one of the first to embrace Islam in Medina. Sahl participated in all the battles during the Prophet's lifetime and was among the few who did not abandon the Prophet (s) during the Battle of Uḥud, defending him against the polytheists. He was also among those who opposed the caliphate of Abū Bakr and defended the rightful claim of Imam ʿAlī (a) to the caliphate. During Imam ʿAlī's reign, Sahl served as one of his commanders and governors in various regions. Sahl passed away in the year 38/659, shortly after the incident of arbitration (*ḥakamiyya*).[6]

1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 353-55; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 42-44; Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futuḥ*, 3: 118-19.
2. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 183.
3. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 353.
4. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 383.
5. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 348-49; Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 3: 8.
6. See Abū Nuʿaym, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 440; Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 2: 662-63; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 2: 318.

During the Prophetic Era

Sahl b. Ḥunayf was among those who embraced Islam at the very beginning of the Prophet's arrival in Medina and participated in all of the Prophet's battles.[1] When ʿAlī (a) arrived in Medina after returning the trusts that the people of Mecca had left with the Prophet (s), he spent a few days with the Prophet (s) in the area of Qubāʾ. One night, while staying in Qubāʾ, ʿAlī (a) noticed a man secretly knocking on the door of a Muslim widow and giving her something. This scene repeated for several nights, prompting ʿAlī (a) to inquire about it from the woman. She explained, "That man is Sahl b. Ḥunayf. He knows I have no one to support me. At night, he goes to the idols of the polytheists, breaks them, and brings them to me so I can use them as firewood."[2]

Sahl was among those who pledged allegiance to the Prophet (s) before the Battle of Uḥud, vowing to stand by him until death.[3] During the battle, when many Muslims fled in the face of the polytheists' surprise attack, Sahl was among the few who remained by the Prophet's side, defending him alongside ʿAlī (a).[4] Sahl b. Ḥunayf shot arrows at the advancing polytheists, and the Prophet (s) said, "Provide Sahl with arrows, for he shoots with ease and precision."[5] In the Battle of Wādī al-Qurā in 7/629, Sahl served as one of the standard-bearers of the Muslim army.[6] Later, in 9/630, when ʿAlī (a) was tasked with leading a campaign to destroy the idol of the Ṭayyiʾ tribe, the standard of the army was entrusted to Sahl.[7]

During the Caliphs' Era

Sahl b. Ḥunayf was among the Anṣār who opposed the succession of Abū Bakr after the Prophet's demise.[8] As a transmitter of the Hadith of Ghadīr,[9] he defended the right of Imam ʿAlī (a) to the caliphate, stating: "I bear witness that I heard the Messenger of God (a), while he was on the pulpit, say: 'Your leader after me is ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), and he is the most charitable of people toward my community.'"[10] Details about Sahl's life during the caliphates of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb are scarce. One report mentions that

1. Abū Nuʿaym, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, 2: 440.
2. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1: 493-94; see also Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 265.
3. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 359.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 1: 318.
5. Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 1: 253.
6. Ibid., 2: 710.
7. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 46.
8. Barqī, *K. al-Rijāl*, 63.
9. Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 3: 26.
10. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 2: 456; see also Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 1: 78.

during ʿUmar's rule, he was sent by the caliph to assess the taxes and revenues from the agricultural lands of Iraq.[1]

Although a report suggests that Sahl b. Ḥunayf could be counted among those dissatisfied with ʿUthmān's policies,[2] there is no evidence of his active involvement in the public protests against ʿUthmān. As public discontent peaked in late 35/656, ʿUthmān, following ʿAlī's advice, issued a letter addressed to the general populace, promising to govern henceforth in accordance with the Quran and the Prophetic tradition. Sahl b. Ḥunayf was one of the witnesses mentioned under this letter.[3] Moreover, during the period when the assassinated caliph was besieged by protesters, Sahl led the congregational prayers in the Mosque of Medina.[4]

During Imam ʿAlī's Reign

Sahl was among the first individuals to pledge allegiance to ʿAlī (a) one day after the assassination of ʿUthmān.[5] Ibn Ḥunayf was sent by Imam ʿAlī (a) to govern the Levant and replace Muʿāwiya. However, when he reached the region of Tabuk, a group from the area, citing their demand for retribution for ʿUthmān's blood, prevented his entry into the Levant. Upon returning, Sahl presented a report to Imam ʿAlī (a) regarding Muʿāwiya's disobedience, the stance of the Levantine people, and Muʿāwiya's declaration of caliphate.[6]

When news of the defiance and uprising of the people of Jamal reached Imam ʿAlī (a), Sahl was among those whom the Imam (a) consulted regarding the confrontation.[7] When Imam ʿAlī (a) decided to engage the forces of Jamal militarily in Basra, he appointed Sahl b. Ḥunayf as his deputy in Medina.[8] Consequently, Sahl was unable to accompany the Imam (a) during this battle.

Before the Battle of Ṣiffīn, when Imam ʿAlī (a) gathered the Emigrants and Helpers to consult with them about confronting Muʿāwiya, Sahl b. Ḥunayf served as the spokesperson for the Anṣār. He suggested enlisting the people of Kufa, saying: "O Commander of the Faithful, we are at peace with whomever you make peace and at war

1. Maqdisī, *al-Bad' wa l-tārīkh*, 5: 119.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 569.
3. Ibid., 5: 553; Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 411.
4. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 423.
5. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 22-23.
6. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 442-43.
7. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 239.
8. Kalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 181.

with whomever you fight. Our opinion aligns with yours, and we are like your right hand [a source of strength] … As for us [the Anṣār], whenever you summon us, we will not hold back or oppose you, and whenever you command, we will obey."[1] During the Battle of Ṣiffīn, Sahl was entrusted with commanding the infantry of the Basrans.[2]

Since the Battle of Ṣiffīn dragged on and disagreements emerged over its continuation, it ultimately led to the arbitration (*ḥakamiyya*). Sahl b. Ḥunayf was among those who opposed halting the fighting. In his remarks, he criticized the stance of those who supported ceasing the battle as misguided.[3] When the initial document of arbitration was drafted, Sahl b. Ḥunayf was one of the individuals from the Iraqi army who signed it as a witness.[4]

During the period between the Battle of Ṣiffīn and the final arbitration session, which coincided with the beginning of Ramadan in 37/658,[5] Imam ʿAlī (a) appointed Sahl b. Ḥunayf as governor of Fārs. However, before long, the people of the region expelled him, and Ziyād b. Abīh assumed the position on behalf of Imam ʿAlī (a).[6] Some time later, Sahl b. Ḥunayf passed away in Kufa. Imam ʿAlī (a) performed the funeral prayer for him.[7] Sahl was among the most beloved individuals to the Imam (a). Mourning his loss with profound sorrow, Imam ʿAlī (a) reflected on the hardships endured by his companions in their devotion to him, saying: "Were a mountain to love me, it would crumble!"[8]

Mālik al-Ashtar (d. 38/658)

His name was Mālik b. al-Ḥārith, and he traced his lineage to the al-Nakhaʿ tribe, a branch of the larger tribe of Madhḥij. Mālik was known as a brave warrior and an accomplished Arab poet who lived during both the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods. He likely embraced Islam during the Prophet's lifetime, but since he did not have the opportunity to meet him, he is counted among the *Tābiʿūn* (companions of companions). Mālik earned the epithet *al-Ashtar* (meaning "the one whose eye is covered") because he lost one of his eyes during the Battle of al-Yarmūk. He was a loyal companion of ʿAlī (a) and one of his prominent commanders. During the reign of Imam ʿAlī (a), Mālik served as a governor in

1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 93-94.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 303.
3. Ḥumaydī, *Musnad*, 1: 385; Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 359; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 9: 100.
4. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 196.
5. See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 67.
6. Kalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 192.
7. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 360.
8. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 111.

various regions and participated in all of ʿAlī's battles. In 38/658, while en route to Egypt to assume governorship on behalf of ʿAlī (a), Mālik was poisoned through a plot orchestrated by Muʿāwiya and was martyred.[1]

During the Caliphs' Era

There is no information available about Mālik's life before the Prophet's demise. He played an active role in the conquest of the Levant, which began during the caliphate of Abū Bakr and continued into the era of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.[2] Mālik al-Ashtar was among those sent by Abū Bakr to support Khālid b. al-Walīd during the early Islamic conquests in the Levant.[3] He participated in several Islamic conquests during ʿUmar's caliphate, including the Battle of al-Qādisiyya in 14/635[4] and the Battle of al-Yarmūk in 15/636, where he lost one of his eyes.[5] The exact time Mālik chose Kufa as his place of residence is unknown. However, historical records indicate that he was living there during the caliphate of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān. Mālik al-Ashtar, along with other prominent figures of Kufa, opposed certain policies and actions of ʿUthmān, which led to their exile from Kufa to the Levant by order of the caliph.[6]

According to historical sources, al-Ashtar was one of the most prominent critics of ʿUthmān's policies in Kufa. He led a delegation to Medina to convey his grievances to the caliph.[7] When the Egyptian protesters arrived and laid siege to ʿUthmān, Mālik initially attempted to mediate between them and the caliph but was unsuccessful.[8] Although he had come to Medina as a critic, when the protesters tightened their siege around ʿUthmān and the risk of his assassination grew imminent, Mālik, along with a group of others, withdrew from the ranks of the besiegers.[9]

During Imam ʿAlī's Reign

According to some reports, Mālik al-Ashtar was the first to pledge allegiance to ʿAlī (a).[10] He initially secured the allegiance of the people of Kufa for the Imam and, in a sermon,

1. See Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 239; Mizzī, *Thadhīb al-kamāl*, 27: 126-29; Dhahabīm *Siyar aʿlām*, 4: 34-35.
2. See Wāqidī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*.
3. Ibid., 1: 62.
4. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 120.
5. Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, 261.
6. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 323.
7. Kalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 168.
8. Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 4: 1151-52.
9. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 378.
10. Ibid., 4: 423.

emphasized ʿAlī's divine designation, his unparalleled knowledge, and his virtues, urging the people to pledge their allegiance to him.[1] In one account, Mālik insisted on obtaining allegiance from those who were reluctant and suggested that Imam ʿAlī (a) imprison those who refused to pledge. However, the Imam (a), emphasizing the voluntary nature of allegiance, chose to leave them to their own decisions.[2]

After the defiance of the leaders of Jamal, when Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī, the governor of Kufa, refused to mobilize troops for the battle, Mālik al-Ashtar was among those who traveled to Kufa to rally the people for war.[3] He joined Imam ʿAlī's army on the way to Basra, accompanied by the Kufan forces.[4] During the Battle of Jamal, al-Ashtar commanded the right wing of Imam ʿAlī's army.[5] He displayed great valor on the battlefield, defeating numerous enemy soldiers. Riding fearlessly through the fray, he loudly challenged the opponents, saying, "O allies of the Camel [Jamal], who will face me?"[6] As the soldiers of Jamal fiercely defended the camel carrying ʿĀ'isha, Mālik al-Ashtar charged toward it, aiming to neutralize the camel. In a confrontation with ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, who held the camel's reins, Mālik overcame him, paving the way for the camel to be brought down, ultimately securing the defeat of the Jamal forces.[7]

After the victory at the Battle of Jamal and upon arriving in Kufa, Imam ʿAlī appointed Mālik al-Ashtar as governor over the regions of Mosul, Nusaybin, Dārā, Sinjar, Āmud, Mayyāfāriqīn, Hit, and Anah (ʿĀnāt).[8] Mālik successfully subdued the supporters of ʿUthmān in these areas.[9] Meanwhile, news reached Kufa of Muʿāwiya's refusal to relinquish control of the Levant. Imam ʿAlī (a) consulted with his companions, during which Mālik al-Ashtar declared his and his followers' loyalty and readiness to confront the Levantine adversaries.[10] Mālik served as one of the commanders of the Kufan army en route to Ṣiffīn. Leading a contingent, he overcame the resistance of the people of al-Riqqa, who, motivated by their demand for vengeance for ʿUthmān, had blocked the army's path.[11]

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1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 178-79.
2. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 143.
3. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 3: 227.
4. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 487-88.
5. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 239.
6. See Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 479-82.
7. See Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 96-97.
8. These are regions in northern Iraq.
9. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 153-54.
10. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 95.
11. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 178.

On the way to Ṣiffīn, Imam ʿAlī (a) appointed Mālik al-Ashtar as the commander of the army's vanguard. The Imam (a) instructed him to exercise restraint if he encountered the Levantine forces, ensuring that he did not initiate hostilities until he had made the case against them clear.[1] When the Levantine army reached the Euphrates before the Kufan army and blocked their access to the river, Mālik was among the Kufan commanders who succeeded in breaking the Levantine control over the riverbank, ensuring access for their forces.[2]

During the Battle of Ṣiffīn, Mālik led the vanguard of the Iraqi army.[3] On the seventh day of the battle, he was also the commander of the Iraqi forces, while the Levantine army was led by Ḥabīb b. Maslama.[4] Mālik al-Ashtar displayed extraordinary bravery on the battlefield and greatly influenced the unity and cohesion of the army with his words.[5] His fierce blows against the Levantine forces left such an impact that even Muʿāwiya was apprehensive of him. Muʿāwiya summoned Marwān b. al-Ḥakam and ordered him to fight Mālik and his companions, but Marwān, out of fear, refused to carry out the command.[6]

In the incident known as *Waqʿat al-Khamīs* ("The Thursday Battle"), which took place on Thursday, 9 Ṣafar 37/July 27, 657, the fighting intensified, and Mālik fought on the battlefield with all his might. After the martyrdom of some of the loyal companions of Imam ʿAlī (a), such as ʿAmmār b. Yāsir and Hāshim b. ʿUtba, ʿAlī (a) found Mālik al-Ashtar weeping. When the Imam (a) inquired about the reason, Mālik replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, I weep because I see people being martyred at your side, yet martyrdom is not granted to me so that I may attain eternal victory through it." The Imam (a) recited a verse with the meaning that Mālik's turn for martyrdom would come in due time.[7]

During the events of *Waqʿat al-Khamīs*, the Levantine army suffered successive blows from the Iraqi forces, and the battlefield witnessed intense fighting late into the night. As the intensity of the battle subsided in the darkness of night, Imam ʿAlī (a) called out to his soldiers, saying, "Tomorrow, I will put an end to this enemy." Upon hearing this, Mālik composed verses encouraging the people to fight against the Levantines.[8]

1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 566-67.
2. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 169-70.
3. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 124.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 305.
5. See Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 182-83.
6. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 132.
7. See Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 175-80.
8. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 469-70.

That same night, voices of opposition to continuing the battle arose among the Iraqi forces. Exhausted from prolonged fighting, some soldiers called for a halt to the war. Seizing the opportunity, the Levantine forces raised Qurans on their spears and called for peace. Mālik al-Ashtar was among those opposing the cessation of the battle and delivered speeches in support of continuing the fight.[1] Before opposition to continuing the war intensified, Mālik had already headed to the battlefield. However, the dissenters threatened the Imam, demanding that he recall al-Ashtar. Just as Mālik was on the verge of a decisive victory, he reluctantly returned to the Iraqi camp at the Imam's command.[2] When word spread that ʿAlī (a) had accepted arbitration (*taḥkīm*), Mālik, in deference to Imam ʿAlī (a), ceased fighting and returned.[3] During the selection of an arbitrator on behalf of the Iraqis, Mālik al-Ashtar was one of the candidates proposed by the Imam (a). However, his nomination faced opposition, particularly from the Yemenis, including al-Ashʿath b. Qays.[4]

During the drafting of the initial arbitration agreement, Mālik was among those who insisted that the title "Commander of the Faithful" (*Amīr al-Muʾminīn* (*a*)) be included for ʿAlī (a). Ultimately, at the Imam's suggestion, Mālik relented, as ʿAlī (a) referenced the precedent of al-Ḥudaybiyya Peace Treaty, where the Prophet (s) had similarly omitted the title "Messenger of God" (*Rasūl Allāh*).[5] Mālik was initially unwilling to have his name included as a witness to the preliminary arbitration agreement. Although he expressed his opposition at first, he later said, "I am content with whatever the Commander of the Faithful (a) has done. I will follow wherever he leads and leave behind whatever he leaves behind, for he does not enter into anything but what is right and just."[6]

As the situation in Egypt deteriorated under the governorship of Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, Imam ʿAlī (a) decided to appoint Mālik al-Ashtar as governor of the region. Emphasizing Mālik's competence in restoring order, the Imam (a) declared him the best candidate for the role. On the 5th of Rajab, 37/December 17, 657, the Imam (a) dispatched Mālik to Egypt with a formal decree of appointment.[7] This decree, known as Mālik al-Ashtar's charter, is preserved as Letter 53 in *Nahj al-Balāgha*. It is one of the longest and most significant letters authored by the Imam (a), often referred to as the Alid manifesto

1. See Ibid., 480-82.
2. See Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 188-89; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 49.
3. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 492.
4. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 192-93.
5. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 151-53.
6. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 511-12; see also Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 336.
7. Ṭabrī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 95.

of governance. Scholars and researchers have continually studied this document, and numerous commentaries have been written on its content and principles.

When news of Mālik's appointment as governor of Egypt reached Muʿāwiya, it caused him great concern. To prevent Mālik from assuming his post, Muʿāwiya promised rewards to one of his agents stationed along Mālik's route to Egypt and ordered him to assassinate Mālik. The agent poisoned a honeyed drink, which Mālik consumed, leading to his martyrdom.[1] Upon hearing of Mālik's death, Muʿāwiya addressed the people of the Levant with satisfaction, saying: "Truly, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) had two powerful arms—one was severed at the Battle of Ṣiffīn [i.e., ʿAmmār b. Yāsir], and the other today [i.e., Mālik al-Ashtar]."[2]

When Imam ʿAlī (a) sent Mālik to Egypt, he introduced him in a letter to the people of that region, saying: "I have sent you one of God's own servants, who neither sleeps during the days of danger, nor shrinks from confronting the enemy in the hours of terror. He is more ardent in attacking the wicked than a blazing fire."[3] Upon learning of Mālik's martyrdom, the Imam (a), deeply grieved, described him, saying: "! If he were a mountain, he would be a towering peak that no hoof could ascend, no bird fly over.[4] O Mālik, women wailing in mourning should cry for someone like you. Where is another like Mālik?"[5]

It is also narrated that when Imam ʿAlī (a) was asked about Mālik, he said: "What can I say about someone whose life brought defeat to the Levantines and whose death brought defeat to the Iraqis? Al-Ashtar was to me as I was to the Messenger of God (a)."[6] Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) is reported to have said that Mālik al-Ashtar is among those who will return during the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdī (a), fighting ahead of the Imam (a) with his sword.[7]

Mālik was considered one of the bravest Arabs, and the people of Kufa always took pride in him.[8] He was also counted among the Arab poets.[9] The news of his martyrdom became the subject of writings by figures such as Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157/774).[10]

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1. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 409.
2. Ṭabrī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 96.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 38.
4. Ibid., wisdom 443.
5. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 194.
6. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Shrḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 2: 214.
7. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 2: 386.
8. Ibn al-Faqīh, *al-Buldān*, 204.
9. Marzbānī, *Muʿjam al-shuʿarā'*, 310.
10. Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 137.

Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr (d. 38/658)

Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, the son of Abū Bakr, the first caliph, and the brother of ʿĀ'isha, the Prophet's wife, belonged to the Banū Taym clan of the Quraysh tribe. He was born in 10/632, coinciding with the Prophet's final Hajj pilgrimage. His mother, Asmāʾ bt. ʿUmays, married Imam ʿAlī (a) after the death of Abū Bakr, and Muḥammad was raised and educated in the house of the Imam (a). He was among the critics of ʿUthmān's policies and, during the caliphate of Imam ʿAlī (a), was considered one of his companions and commanders. Muḥammad participated in the Battles of Jamal and Ṣiffīn and was appointed governor of Egypt by Imam ʿAlī (a). He was martyred during the attack by the Levantine army on Egypt in 38/658.[1]

During the Caliphs' Era

Although Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr is mentioned in the sources focused on the Prophet's companions (*ṣaḥāba*), since he was born in 10/632 and never saw the Prophet (s), he is classified among the *tābiʿūn* (companions of companions).[2] Historical sources provide no information about Muḥammad's life during the caliphates of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, which, given his young age, seems natural. At the time of ʿUmar's death, he would have been around thirteen years old.

The earliest report about Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr concerns the incident of the people of Egypt complaining about ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Sarḥ, the governor appointed by ʿUthmān, and requesting his replacement with Muḥammad. The Egyptians went to Medina to protest against the behavior of Ibn Abī Sarḥ and asked ʿUthmān to appoint Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr as his replacement. ʿUthmān accepted this request and sent Muḥammad with them to Egypt.[3] On the way, the Egyptians intercepted a slave carrying a letter in which ʿUthmān ordered ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Sarḥ to kill Muḥammad and his companions and imprison the protesters. This discovery infuriated the Egyptians and intensified public dissent against ʿUthmān.[4] Following this incident, Muḥammad joined the ranks of the protesters and led the protests by the Banū Taym tribe.[5] In the final hours of ʿUthmān's life, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, along with the Egyptian protesters, entered his house. Muḥammad repeatedly confronted the caliph, but when ʿUthmān invoked the name of

1. See Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 3: 1366; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 4: 326.
2. ʿIjlī, *Mardfat al-thuqāt*, 2: 233.
3. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 55.
4. Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 4: 1159-60.
5. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 56; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 557.

his father, Abū Bakr, Muḥammad withdrew. Shortly after, ʿUthmān's body was taken out of the house. This event led many to believe that Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr was the killer of ʿUthmān.[1]

During Imam ʿAlī's Reign

Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr was among those who pledged allegiance to Imam ʿAlī (a), acknowledging the obligation to obey him as an Imam.[2] It was previously mentioned that in the view of ʿUthmān's supporters, Muḥammad was considered one of the caliph's killers. When Imam ʿAlī (a) sought to identify ʿUthmān's murderers, he went to ʿUthmān's wife, who had witnessed the assassination. She stated that she had seen a group enter their house and recognized only Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr among them. ʿAlī (a) summoned Muḥammad and asked him to explain. Muḥammad responded: "By God, she speaks the truth. I entered the house, but ʿUthmān invoked my father's name in his plea, and for that reason, I left. I repented to God [for this action]. By God, I did not kill him." ʿUthmān's wife confirmed Muḥammad's account.[3] Thus, he was exonerated from the accusation of killing ʿUthmān.

When news of the rebellion of the people of Jamal reached Imam ʿAlī (a), he criticized Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr regarding the actions of his sister, ʿĀ'isha. Muḥammad replied: "O Commander of the Faithful, do not worry. Truly, God is with you and will not abandon you. The people will come to your aid, and God will defend you against them."[4] Muḥammad was among the first to be dispatched to Kufa to mobilize an army and bring reinforcements to Basra. However, Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī's refusal to gather troops impeded this effort.[5]

During the battle, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr commanded the infantry of Imam ʿAlī's army.[6] On the battlefield, Muḥammad fought valiantly and killed several of the Companions of Jamal.[7] When the camel carrying ʿĀ'isha was hamstrung, Muḥammad, following ʿAlī's orders, removed the howdah and helped her dismount. At ʿAlī's instruction, he also set up a tent for his sister and ensured her safety there.[8] After the

1. Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 4: 1296-97.
2. Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 69-70.
3. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 66.
4. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 457.
5. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 478.
6. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 4: 478.
7. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 476-78, 480.
8. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 519; Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 368-69.

battle concluded, Muḥammad went to ʿĀ'isha and said: "Did you not hear the Messenger of God (a) say, "Alī is with the truth, and the truth is with him'? [Yet] you rose against him and fought him in the name of seeking vengeance for ʿUthmān's blood!"[1]

Although some reports indicate that Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, along with Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, the son of Imam ʿAlī (a), commanded the cavalry during the Battle of Ṣiffīn[2]—and that some Iraqis took pride in his presence among the troops[3]—the date recorded in the letter of appointment that Imam ʿAlī (a) wrote for him when sending him to govern Egypt, as well as the chronology of events related to Muḥammad's rule in Egypt as documented in historical sources, suggest that he had departed for Egypt before the Battle of Ṣiffīn.[4] In any case, whether before or after the Battle of Ṣiffīn, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr succeeded Qays b. Saʿd as the governor of Egypt.

Before Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, Qays b. Saʿd was appointed as governor of Egypt in Ṣafar 36/August 656. Contrary to the recommendations of Imam ʿAlī (a), Qays adopted a conciliatory approach toward the avengers of ʿUthmān's blood. This, along with certain rumors spread by Muʿāwiya and his allies, weakened Qays's position. Consequently, ʿAlī (a) decided to dismiss him and send Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr as his replacement.[5]

Imam ʿAlī (a), after drafting a letter of appointment for Muḥammad, sent him to Egypt.[6] Upon assuming the governorship of Egypt, the son of Abū Bakr immediately wrote a letter addressed to Muʿāwiya. In his letter, he highlighted the courage and virtues of Imam ʿAlī (a) during the Prophetic era, as well as the longstanding enmity of Abū Sufyān, Muʿāwiya's father, and his allies toward Islam. He then urged Muʿāwiya to obey Imam ʿAlī (a). However, in response, Muʿāwiya attributed the removal of ʿAlī (a) from the caliphate to Abū Bakr, Muḥammad's father, claiming that it was they, not himself, who defied ʿAlī (a) and deserved blame.[7]

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1. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 98.
2. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 25.
3. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 293.
4. Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd (d. 656/1258), in his citation of the text of Imam ʿAlī's letter of appointment to Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, dates it to Ramadan 36/March 657 (Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 6: 65-66). Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) also mentions Muḥammad's governorship of Egypt among the events of 36/657 (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 556). However, al-Ṣadafī (d. 347/958) places Muḥammad's arrival in Egypt in Ramadan 37/March 658 or Safar 38/August 658 (Ṣadafī, *Tārīkh Ibn Yūnus*, 2: 194). Accepting this latter report would mean that Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr was present during the Battle of Ṣiffīn.
5. See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 546-67; Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 217-18; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 7: 251.
6. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 27.
7. See Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 393-97.

Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, unlike Qays b. Saʿd, did not tolerate accommodating the avengers of ʿUthmān's blood or those who refused to pledge allegiance to Imam ʿAlī (a). He gave them an ultimatum: either pledge allegiance or leave Egypt. Amid these developments and the disputes arising during the Battle of Ṣiffīn and the arbitration incident, Imam ʿAlī's opponents in Egypt grew emboldened and confronted Muḥammad. As Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr's position in Egypt weakened, Muʿāwiya dispatched ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ in an attempt to wrest Egypt from the authority of Imam ʿAlī (a). When the Levantine forces arrived, Muḥammad confronted them. However, as reinforcements from the Levant reached Egypt and the people of Iraq showed reluctance in mobilizing support for Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, he was forced to retreat.[1] Eventually, Muʿāwiya b. Ḥudayj, a commander of the Levantine army, found Muḥammad hiding in a ruin. Recalling the killing of ʿUthmān, Ibn Ḥudayj drew his sword and killed Muḥammad, martyring him. He then placed Muḥammad's lifeless body in a sheepskin and set it on fire.[2]

When the news of Muḥammad's martyrdom reached Imam ʿAlī (a), he sorrowfully said: "He was like a son to me, and to my children and nephews, like a brother."[3] In another report, it is narrated that upon hearing of Muḥammad's martyrdom and learning of the Levantines' rejoicing over the event, ʿAlī (a) said: "Our grief for him matches their joy [over this event]. Since I first stepped into these conflicts, I have not mourned anyone's martyrdom as deeply as I have for him. He was raised by me, I regarded him as a son, and he was well-wishing to me. We grieve for someone like him, and we seek our reward for it from God."[4] Some time later, in a letter to ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, ʿAlī (a) informed him of Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr's martyrdom and described him with attributes such as "sincere son, a diligent governor, a cutting sword, and a pillar of support."[5]

Ḥujr b. ʿAdī (d. 51/671)

Ḥujr b. ʿAdī b. Muʿāwiya was of Yemeni origin and belonged to the Kinda tribe. Along with members of his tribe, he traveled to Medina and declared his Islam before the Prophet (s). Ḥujr participated in the battles of al-Qādisiyya and Jalūlāʾ during the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and was among the companions who settled in Kufa. He was one of the Kufans critical of ʿUthmān's rule and, during the caliphate of Imam ʿAlī

1. See Ṭabraī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 97-105; Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 254-56.
2. Ṭabraī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 103-4; Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 409.
3. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 194.
4. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 409.
5. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 35, wisdom 325.

(a), became one of his close companions and commanders. Ḥujr fought in the battles of Jamal, Ṣiffīn, and Nahrawān. After the martyrdom of Imam ʿAlī (a), he supported Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and served as a commander in his army during the conflict with the Levantines. In 51/671, after protesting the insults directed at Imam ʿAlī (a) by Muʿāwiya's governors, he was summoned to the Levant. On the way there, by the order of Muʿāwiya, he was executed in the area of Marj al-ʿAdhrāʾ, achieving martyrdom.[1]

During the Caliphs' Era

Although Ḥujr was among those who lived during both the pre-Islamic era and the advent of Islam,[2] and he declared his Islam to the Prophet (s),[3] historical sources provide no information about his life during the Prophetic period. Similarly, there is a lack of historical data about his life during the caliphate of Abū Bakr. Ḥujr b. ʿAdī participated in the battles of al-Qādisiyya in 14/635 and Jalūlāʾ in 16/637 during the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.[4] He was one of the Prophet's companions who made Kufa his home and held leadership over one of the city's seven districts, which included the tribes of Kinda, Quḍāʿa, Muhra, and the people of Hadhramaut.[5]

During the caliphate of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, Ḥujr was among those who objected to the actions and conduct of Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ, the governor of Kufa. Along with a group of prominent Kufans, he sent a letter of protest to the caliph, criticizing the behavior of his governor in Kufa.[6] Ḥujr is also noted as one of the Kufans who, due to their criticisms, were exiled to the Levant.[7] It appears that Ḥujr was not present in Medina during the protests that culminated in the assassination of ʿUthmān.

During Imam ʿAlī's Reign

During the Battle of Jamal, when Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī refused to send the Kufan army to Basra, Ḥujr b. ʿAdī was among those who, along with Imam al-Ḥasan (a), traveled to Kufa to encourage the people to join the battle. In a sermon, Ḥujr urged the people to support the Commander of the Faithful (a).[8] In his address, he highlighted Imam al-Ḥasan's virtues and described him as the envoy of one who calls to truth and guidance. Moved by

1. See Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 241-44; Ibnk ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 1: 326-32; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 1: 461-62.
2. Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3: 534.
3. Maqdisī, *al-Badʾ wa l-tārīkh*, 5: 108.
4. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 242; Bakādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 260.
5. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 235.
6. Ibid., 5: 530.
7. Mifīd, *al-Jamal*, 137-38.
8. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 145.

Ḥujr's words, the people pledged their obedience and prepared to join the army of Imam ʿAlī (a).[1] During the Battle of Jamal, Ḥujr b. ʿAdī served as the commander of the infantry on one of the army's flanks.[2]

During the Battle of Ṣiffīn, Ḥujr joined the army of Imam ʿAlī (a) while heading a contingent of Kufan soldiers.[3] He was among those sent by Imam ʿAlī (a) to Muʿāwiya's camp to negotiate and attempt to prevent the outbreak of war.[4] During this battle, Ḥujr commanded the soldiers of Kinda and displayed great bravery on the battlefield.[5] During the Battle of Nahrawān in 38/658, he was entrusted with commanding the right flank of Imam ʿAlī's army.[6]

Between the years 38-40/658–661, raiding parties from the Levant, sent by the order of Muʿāwiya, targeted areas under Imam ʿAlī's rule. Ḥujr b. ʿAdī was among the commanders dispatched by Imam ʿAlī (a) to confront these groups. In 39/659, al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays led a force of 3,000 Levantine soldiers in attacks on western and central Iraq.[7] When Imam ʿAlī (a) expressed discontent in a sermon over the people's lack of support in countering these raids, Ḥujr declared his unwavering loyalty, saying: "O Commander of the Faithful, may God not bring close to Paradise anyone who distances themselves from you. Follow the divine tradition, for truly, truth is supported, the scent of martyrdom is the sweetest of fragrances. Send me with a group of sincere people, and aid me with your guidance." Pleased by Ḥujr's words, Imam ʿAlī (a) replied: "May God not deprive you of martyrdom, for I know you are a man of martyrdom."[8] With a force of 4,000 soldiers, Ḥujr confronted the Levantine raiders. Under his command, the group succeeded in killing several of the marauders and driving the remainder out.[9]

Ḥujr witnessed the events surrounding the martyrdom of Imam ʿAlī (a). When he learned of Ibn Muljam's intention to assassinate the Imam (a), he attempted to warn him beforehand, but his efforts were unsuccessful, and the Imam (a) was struck by Ibn Muljam's fatal blow.[10] Ḥujr b. ʿAdī was a member of Imam ʿAlī's elite guard, known as

1. See Mifīd, *al-Jamal*, 255-56.
2. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 468.
3. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 117.
4. Ṭabraī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 574.
5. See Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 205, 243, 381.
6. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 210.
7. Ṭabraī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 135.
8. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 196.
9. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 438.
10. Abū al-Faraj, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 47.

Shurṭat al-Khamīs.[1] The members of this group had pledged unwavering loyalty to the Imam (a), even to the point of sacrificing their lives in his defense. In return, Imam ʿAlī (a) promised them Paradise.[2]

After Imam ʿAlī (a)

After the martyrdom of Imam ʿAlī (a) and the Kufans' allegiance to Imam al-Ḥasan (a) as caliph, Muʿāwiya set out for Iraq with a large army. Ḥujr b. ʿAdī, one of the commanders loyal to the Imam (a), was tasked by him with mobilizing troops.[3] Although Ḥujr was among the objectors during the peace treaty between Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and Muʿāwiya,[4] he steadfastly maintained his belief in the superiority of the Commander of the Faithful (a). During the governorship of al-Mughīra b. Shuʿba, Muʿāwiya's appointee over Kufa, curses were frequently directed at ʿAlī (a) and his followers from the pulpit, in accordance with Muʿāwiya's orders. On one such occasion, Ḥujr rose in protest and recited this verse: "O you who have faith! Be maintainers of justice and witnesses for the sake of Allah, even if it should be against yourselves or [your] parents and near relatives" (Q 4:135). He then declared: "Indeed, I bear witness that the one whom you curse is superior to the one to whom you call others [i.e., Muʿāwiya]." Due to Ḥujr's status as a companion of the Prophet (s) and his social standing in Kufa, al-Mughīra refrained from taking any action against him.[5]

When Ziyād b. Abīh became the governor of Kufa, he did not follow al-Mughīra's lenient approach toward those who refrained from cursing ʿAlī (a). Ascending the pulpit, he threatened the people, declaring that anyone who disobeyed Muʿāwiya's order to curse ʿAlī (a) and his followers would face nothing less than death. Despite these threats, Ḥujr b. ʿAdī and a group of other Shiites loyal to Imam ʿAlī (a) continued to refuse compliance. Eventually, Ziyād b. Abīh ordered his soldiers to attack them, resulting in the death of some. Ḥujr, along with several others, was captured and sent to the Levant to be brought before Muʿāwiya. Upon reaching Marj al-ʿAdhrāʾ near Damascus, a messenger arrived with Muʿāwiya's command for their execution. One by one, the captives were martyred at the hands of Muʿāwiya's soldiers.[6] When Ḥujr's turn came, he said, "Do not wash the blood from my body, and do not remove the shackles from my

1. Barqī, *K. al-Rijāl*, 6.
2. Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 2-3.
3. Irbilī, *Kashf al-ghumma*, 1: 539.
4. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 220.
5. Abū al-Faraj, *al-Aghānī*, 17: 90-91.
6. See Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 230-31.

hands and feet. Bury me in my garments, for I shall meet Muʿāwiya tomorrow [on the Day of Resurrection]."[1]

Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), addressing Muʿāwiya regarding the killing of Ḥujr b. ʿAdī and his companions, said: "Are you not the one who unjustly and out of enmity put Ḥujr b. ʿAdī and his companions to death? Those who were devout worshippers and prayerful, who regarded oppression as vile and heresies as grave, and who feared no reproach in [pursuing] the way of God?"[2] ʿĀ'isha also objected to Muʿāwiya's actions. She condemned him by recalling the words of the Prophet (s): "A group will be killed in [the area of] Marj al-ʿAdhrā', and the inhabitants of the heavens will be angered [by their killing]."[3]

ʿAdī b. Ḥātim (d. 67/686-87)

ʿAdī b. Ḥātim, the son of Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī—one of the most renowned generous figures among the Arabs—belonged to the Ṭayyi' tribe. A follower of Christianity, he embraced Islam in 9/631 and was appointed by the Prophet (s) as the collector of alms for his tribe. He retained this responsibility during Abū Bakr's caliphate and refused to join the claimants of Prophethood. During the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, he participated in the conquest of Iraq and made Kufa his home. Under the rule of Imam ʿAlī (a), he was among his close companions and commanders, participating in the battles of Jamal and Ṣiffīn. He continued his loyalty during the imamate of Imam al-Ḥasan (a). ʿAdī passed away in 67/686–87, at over 100 years of age.[4]

During the Prophetic Era

Before the Prophet's mission and the advent of Islam, ʿAdī b. Ḥātim had abandoned idol worship and embraced Christianity.[5] With the spread of the Prophet's call in the Hijaz, ʿAdī decided to migrate to the Levant. In 9/630, when ʿAlī (a) led a military expedition tasked with demolishing the idol temple of al-Fuls in the land of Ṭayyi', ʿAdī fled under the cover of night and departed for the Levant.[6] During this expedition, his sister Saffāna was captured by the Muslims and brought to Medina.[7]

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1. Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 2: 457.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 121; Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 2: 297.
3. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 231.
4. See Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 3: 1057-59; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 3: 505-7; ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, 4: 388.
5. Ibn al-Kalbī, *al-Aṣnām*, 61.
6. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 2: 578-79.
7. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 124.

ʿAdī's sister lived respectfully in Medina and, after some time, embraced Islam through ʿAlī's intercession.[1] Later, Saffāna sought permission from the Prophet (s) to visit her brother, which he granted, gifting her some wealth as well. When she reunited with her brother and recounted her conversion to Islam, along with the respectful treatment she had received from the Prophet (s) and the Muslims, ʿAdī b. Ḥātim decided to travel to Medina to discuss Islam with the Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) warmly welcomed ʿAdī and, after a conversation, he embraced Islam.[2] The Prophet (s) then entrusted ʿAdī b. Ḥātim with the responsibility of collecting alms from the tribes of Ṭayyiʾ and Asad.[3]

During the Caliphs' Era

During the apostasy of certain Arab tribes in the Hijaz between 11–12/633–34, ʿAdī b. Ḥātim was among those who refused to accept the claims of the self-proclaimed Prophets. He also prevented members of his tribe, Ṭayyiʾ, from joining this movement. With the alms collected from his tribe, he went to Abū Bakr, acknowledged his caliphate, and handed over the wealth. ʿAdī also led a force comprised of his tribe in battles against the apostates.[4] While his recognition of Abū Bakr's caliphate and submission of alms and zakāt could be interpreted as support for the Saqīfa event and Abū Bakr's caliphate, some reports suggest that ʿAdī b. Ḥātim later withdrew his support for Abū Bakr's caliphate and inclined toward ʿAlī (a), endorsing his rightful claim to the caliphate.[5]

During the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿAdī was among the commanders who participated in the conquests of Iraq and other regions.[6] It was probably during this period that he made Kufa his residence.[7] During the rule of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, ʿAdī benefited from certain governmental privileges[8] and, according to some reports, maintained a favorable relationship with the caliph.[9] Nevertheless, some have counted him among ʿUthmān's killers.[10] One report suggests that he considered ʿUthmān's assassination to be universally accepted and regarded it as an action on which no one

1. See Wāqidī, *K. al-Maghāzī*, 3: 988-89.
2. Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 1: 202.
3. Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 98.
4. See Wāqidī, *al-Ridda*, 63-67, 89-90.
5. Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 38.
6. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt* (*al-Ṭabaqa al-rābiʿa*), 658; Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 114.
7. Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Ṭabaqāt*, 225.
8. Balādhurī, *Fitūḥ al-buldān*, 269.
9. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt* (*al-Ṭabaqa al-rābiʿa*), 657.
10. See Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 62.

would disagree.[1] Additionally, other accounts indicate that ʿAdī was present during the initial attack on ʿUthmān's house.[2] However, opposing reports depict ʿAdī b. Ḥātim, alongside Mālik al-Ashtar and ʿAmr b. al-Ḥamiq, as individuals who distanced themselves from the general wave of protests against ʿUthmān.[3]

During Imam ʿAlī's Reign

The name of ʿAdī b. Ḥātim is mentioned among the Muhājirūn who pledged allegiance to Imam ʿAlī (a) after the assassination of ʿUthmān.[4] During the rebellion of the people of Jamal and their insurrection against Imam ʿAlī (a), ʿAdī expressed his readiness to mobilize his tribe. After receiving Imam ʿAlī's approval, he went to his people, highlighting the courage and steadfastness of the members of Ṭayyiʾ and inviting them to support Imam ʿAlī (a). In his address, he described ʿAlī (a) as the embodiment of guidance and regarded fighting alongside him as the path to the prosperity of both this world and the hereafter. The people of Ṭayyiʾ, affirming their willingness to confront the people of Jamal, declared their compliance with Imam ʿAlī (a). They joined the army of Imam ʿAlī (a) with a force of 3,000 soldiers.[5]

ʿAdī b. Ḥātim served as the commander of the soldiers of the Ṭayyiʾ tribe during the Battle of Jamal.[6] On the battlefield, he courageously charged at the enemy and was present during the fall of the camel carrying ʿĀʾisha, an event in which he lost one of his eyes.[7] In the same battle, ʿAdī's eldest son, Ṭarīf, attained martyrdom.[8]

When news of Muʿāwiya's refusal to step down from the governorship of the Levant reached Kufa, ʿAdī, along with Mālik al-Ashtar and others, insisted on confronting Muʿāwiya and the people of the Levant.[9] After Imam ʿAlī (a) announced his determination to confront Muʿāwiya, ʿAdī b. Ḥātim was one of those who delivered speeches in support of the Imam's decision. In his remarks, he stated, "O people, by God, if anyone other than ʿAlī (a) were to summon us to fight against Muslims, we would never respond." ʿAdī then emphasized that the Imam (a) never acted without conclusive reasons, proceeding to recount the virtues and merits of Imam ʿAlī (a). His words inspired

1. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt* (*al-Ṭabaqa al-rābiʿa*), 657-58; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 7: 525.
2. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 569.
3. See Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 65; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 104.
4. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 104.
5. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 77.
6. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 146.
7. See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 521-25.
8. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 367; see also Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 261.
9. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 150.

those who harbored doubts to join the Kufan army and resolve to confront the Levantines.[1]

During the Battle of Ṣiffīn, ʿAdī b. Ḥātim commanded the soldiers from the tribes of Quḍāʿa and Ṭayyiʾ.[2] He was among those sent by Imam ʿAlī to Muʿāwiya's camp before the outbreak of war, tasked with summoning him to obey the Imam (a) and deterring him from conflict.[3] On this mission, ʿAdī acted as the spokesperson for the delegation. Addressing Muʿāwiya, he highlighted the virtues of Imam ʿAlī (a) and the general pledge of allegiance given to him by the people. He warned Muʿāwiya against war and cautioned him about meeting the same fate as the people of Jamal. In response, however, Muʿāwiya insisted on igniting the flames of war and accused ʿAdī of complicity in the killing of ʿUthmān.[4]

ʿAdī b. Ḥātim consistently participated in battle, fighting with great bravery.[5] His courage was so remarkable that it caused concern for Muʿāwiya. According to one report, Muʿāwiya expressed apprehension over the presence of certain companions of Imam ʿAlī (a) in the Iraqi army, among whom ʿAdī was mentioned.[6] When weariness from the war and reluctance to continue fighting spread among the Iraqi troops,[7] ʿAdī b. Ḥātim was one of those who insisted on pressing forward with the battle, persistently encouraging the soldiers to continue the fight.[8]

After the cessation of the war and the drafting of the initial arbitration agreement in Ṣafar 37/July 657, a group of Imam ʿAlī's companions, including ʿAdī b. Ḥātim, addressed Muʿāwiya and his supporters. They attributed the halt in the war and the acceptance of arbitration to Muʿāwiya's deception and the ruse of raising Qurans on spears, which misled the Iraqi troops. This group emphasized the necessity for the two arbiters to follow the truth and issue a judgment based on the Quran. They declared that if these conditions were not met, they would return to the battlefield.[9] According to some reports, ʿAdī distrusted the two arbiters—ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ and Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī. He regarded ʿAmr as cunning and Abū Mūsā as weak in judgment.[10]

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1. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 141.
2. Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 195.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 301-2.
4. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 5.
5. See Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 3: 54, 86.
6. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 426.
7. See Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 188-89.
8. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 482.
9. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 4: 207.
10. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 155-56.

When news of the Kharijites' rebellion reached Imam ʿAlī (a), he called upon the leaders of various tribes to join the Kufan army with their soldiers. ʿAdī, along with the warriors of the Ṭayyi' tribe, declared their readiness to fight. Zayd b. ʿAdī, the son of ʿAdī b. Ḥātim, lost his maternal uncle—who was among the Levantine forces—during the Battle of Ṣiffīn. This loss led him to separate from Imam ʿAlī's army and eventually join the Kharijites.[1] During the Battle of Nahrawān, he fought as a Kharijite and was killed.[2] However, another son of ʿAdī, Ṭarafa, remained with the Kufan army and was martyred in the same battle.[3]

In 39/659, during the raids conducted by Muʿāwiya's forces on territories under Imam ʿAlī's rule, al-Nuʿmān b. Bashīr launched an attack on the ʿAyn al-Tamr region[4] with a thousand soldiers. When the Kufans failed to respond to Imam ʿAlī's call for mobilization, ʿAdī b. Ḥātim, declaring that ignoring the Imam's request was an unforgivable sin, rallied the soldiers of his tribe and declared his readiness to fight. Imam ʿAlī (a) appointed ʿAdī to lead a force in pursuit of al-Nuʿmān and his men, driving them back to the borders of the Levant.[5]

After Imam ʿAlī (a)

After the martyrdom of Imam ʿAlī (a), ʿAdī b. Ḥātim remained a loyal companion of Imam al-Ḥasan (a). Following the Kufans' pledge of allegiance to Imam al-Ḥasan (a) and the news of Muʿāwiya's intent to march on Iraq, al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī (a) called upon the people to engage in jihad. Seeing the people's reluctance to respond to the Imam's call, ʿAdī rose and, in a loud voice, declared: "I am the son of Ḥātim! What is worse than this state you are in? Will you not answer the call of your Imam, the grandson of your Prophet (s)? Where are the orators of [the tribe of] Muḍar? Where are the Muslims? Where are those who, when called upon, rise, whose tongues in times of peace are as sharp as swords, and who are swift to act in the plains of battle? Do you not fear the wrath of God and its disgrace?" Imam al-Ḥasan (a) was pleased with ʿAdī's words and prayed for him.[6] Historical sources provide no information about ʿAdī's life during the imamate of Imam al-Ḥusayn.

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1. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 522.
2. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 205; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 375.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 364.
4. A town near al-Anbar in western Kufa (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 4: 176).
5. See Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 195; Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 2: 455.
6. Abū al-Faraj, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 69-70.

Among Imam ʿAlī's companions who were brought to Muʿāwiya's court after the Imam's martyrdom was ʿAdī b. Ḥātim. Even in the presence of Muʿāwiya, now seated on the caliphate's throne, ʿAdī remained steadfast in his support for ʿAlī (a) and unabashed in expressing his love for him. One day, when Muʿāwiya asked him about his affection for ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), ʿAdī replied: "By God, my love for him [ʿAlī (a)] is profound and only continues to grow. Were it not for my love for him, I would have no desire for Paradise, and I will attain it only through my love for him. Did not the Messenger of God (a) make him a signpost during the Farewell Pilgrimage? Did he not proclaim on the day of Ghadīr Khumm: 'Whoever considers me his master, ʿAlī is also his master. O God, be the master of those who take him as their master, forsake those who forsake him, and support those who support him'? Did you not hear the voice of the Messenger of God (a) on that day, as he stood atop the saddle of his camel, speaking about him? We heard it just as you did, and we saw it just as you did. Therefore, this serves as proof for you and all who witnessed that day with their eyes and heard the words of Muḥammad (a) with their ears."[1]

In another account, Muʿāwiya asked ʿAdī about his sons, Ṭarīf and Ṭarafa. ʿAdī replied, "They were killed fighting alongside ʿAlī (a)." Muʿāwiya remarked, "'Alī did not treat you fairly—he had your sons killed while keeping his own children alive." ʿAdī responded, "It was I who did not treat ʿAlī fairly, for he was killed while I am still alive." He then declared that the hatred for Muʿāwiya still burned in his heart and those of his companions and that they were always ready to fight him. Referring to the insults directed at ʿAlī (a) from the pulpits, ʿAdī said, "Indeed, having our throats cut and our chests trampled is easier for us than hearing insults against ʿAlī (a)."[2] ʿAdī b. Ḥātim ultimately passed away in 67/686–87, at the age of over 100 years.[3]

Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣawḥān (d. After 60/680)

Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣawḥān al-ʿAbdī traced his lineage to the Banū ʿAbd al-Qays tribe. He embraced Islam during the Prophet's lifetime but, as he did not meet the Prophet (s), he is not counted among his companions. He was known as an eloquent orator and a skilled speaker of his tribe. During the caliphate of ʿUthmān, Ṣaʿṣaʿa was among the Kufan critics of the caliph's policies, which led to his exile from Kufa to the Levant. A loyal companion

1. Ḍubbī, *Akhbār al-wāfidīn*, 23-24.
2. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 3: 4-5.
3. Dhahbī, *Siyar aʿlām*, 3: 165.

of Imam ʿAlī (a), Ṣaʿṣaʿa participated in all of the Imam's battles. He passed away during Muʿāwiya's rule, prior to 60/680.[1]

During the Caliphs' Era

Although Ṣaʿṣaʿa embraced Islam during the Prophet's lifetime, he is considered among the Tābiʿūn (companions of companions), as he neither saw nor directly encountered the Prophet (s).[2] Little is known about his life during the caliphates of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. Ṣaʿṣaʿa, along with several other prominent figures of Kufa, criticized ʿUthmān's policies. As a result, they were exiled from Kufa to the Levant by order of the caliph.[3]

Ṣaʿṣaʿa, as one of the eloquent orators among the Arabs, frequently criticized ʿUthmān and his policies in his speeches, at times provoking reactions from the caliph.[4] He was among the Kufan protestors who traveled to Medina to present their grievances directly to ʿUthmān.[5] When ʿUthmān was besieged by the protestors, Ṣaʿṣaʿa acted as their representative and approached the caliph. In response to ʿUthmān's inquiry about the reasons for their protests, Ṣaʿṣaʿa, citing verse 40 of Surah al-Ḥajj (22), replied: "We have been expelled unjustly from our homes because we said, 'Our Lord is God.'"[6]

During Imam ʿAlī's Reign

Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣawḥān was among the Shiites[7] and is counted among those who pledged allegiance to ʿAlī (a) at the outset of his caliphate.[8] Some sources also describe Ṣaʿṣaʿa's family, including his brothers Zayd and Sīḥān, as devoted Shiites and loyal supporters of Imam ʿAlī (a).[9] Ṣaʿṣaʿa was one of those who, following the general pledge of allegiance to Imam ʿAlī (a), delivered speeches in support of his caliphate. Addressing Imam ʿAlī (a), he declared: "By God, O Commander of the Faithful, you have adorned the caliphate, and it will never adorn you. You have elevated the caliphate, and it will never elevate you. Truly, it is the caliphate that needs you far more than you need it."[10]

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1. See Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 244; Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr, *al-Istīʿāb*, 2: 717; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 2: 403.
2. Asqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, 3: 348.
3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 323.
4. See Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 3: 1063.
5. Dhahbī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 3: 430.
6. Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 171.
7. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, 624.
8. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 108.
9. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, 402; Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 3: 37.
10. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 179.

When Imam ʿAlī (a) was informed of the defiance of the leaders of the Battle of Jamal, their killing of Muslims, and their plundering of the public treasury, he sent Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣawḥān with a message to Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, and ʿĀ'isha. In his letter, the Imam criticized their actions and invited them to the right path. When Ṣaʿṣaʿa delivered the Imam's message, he was met with their insistence on waging war. He returned to Imam ʿAlī (a) and informed him of their determination to fight.[1] During the battle, Ṣaʿṣaʿa's two brothers, Zayd and Sīḥān, were martyred.[2] After Zayd, who had been the standard-bearer for the soldiers of the Banū ʿAbd al-Qays tribe, was martyred, Ṣaʿṣaʿa took up the banner.[3]

According to some reports, after the conclusion of the Battle of Jamal, Imam ʿAlī (a) consulted with his companions, including Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣawḥān, about how to respond to Muʿāwiya's refusal to relinquish the governorship of the Levant. During the meeting, Ṣaʿṣaʿa, highlighting the misguidance of Muʿāwiya and his followers, suggested that the Imam send a trustworthy envoy with a letter inviting Muʿāwiya to pledge allegiance. Imam ʿAlī (a) accepted this suggestion and instructed Ṣaʿṣaʿa to draft the letter, providing guidance on its composition, and to deliver it personally to Muʿāwiya. During their ensuing conversation, Ṣaʿṣaʿa extolled the virtues of Banū Hāshim and condemned the faults of Banū Umayya. Muʿāwiya was unable to offer a fitting response. Turning to his Umayyad companions, he remarked, "This is what true men should be like."[4]

When the armies of Iraq and the Levant met in Ṣiffīn in Dhū al-Ḥijja 36/May–June 657, the Levantines preemptively seized control of the Euphrates and cut off access to water for the Iraqis.[5] Imam ʿAlī (a) sent Ṣaʿṣaʿa with a message to Muʿāwiya and his forces, declaring that they had come to give them an ultimatum before any fighting began. He urged them to reopen access to the water, warning that if they refused, the Iraqis would have no choice but to fight for it.[6] During the Battle of Ṣiffīn, Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣawḥān commanded the troops of Banū ʿAbd al-Qays.[7]

When the call for arbitration arose from both armies and the Levantines raised the Quran on their spears, the Iraqi forces began to withdraw from battle. At this moment, Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣawḥān stood in the midst of the battlefield, urging the Iraqis to continue

1. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 313-14.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 530.
3. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 2: 474.
4. See Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 3: 38-40.
5. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 196; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 567-68.
6. Daynawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭuwāl*, 168.
7. Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 195.

fighting, declaring: "If Muʿāwiya prevails, he will respect no rights."[1] When Imam ʿAlī (a) decided to submit to arbitration, some of his companions expressed their views. Ṣaʿṣaʿa, affirming his unwavering obedience to Imam ʿAlī (a), said: "If all the people disobey you, we will remain obedient. Therefore, if you choose to accept what you have been called to [arbitration], we will listen to you and obey your commands. Seek goodness from God, and do what you deem best." Imam ʿAlī (a) was pleased with his words and prayed for him.[2]

After Imam ʿAlī (a) was compelled to accept arbitration and during the return from Ṣiffīn, a group of Iraqi soldiers—later known as the the Khawārij (Kharijites)—separated from the rest of the Iraqis and gathered in Ḥarūrāʾ, a short distance from Kufa.[3] Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣawḥān, along with ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, was among those sent by Imam ʿAlī (a) to advise them. As a result of Ṣaʿṣaʿa's words, a group of about 2,000 individuals left Ḥarūrāʾ and rejoined Kufa and the supporters of Imam ʿAlī (a). Before the battle, Ṣaʿṣaʿa and Ibn ʿAbbās were again sent to counsel the Kharijites. This time, as a result of Ṣaʿṣaʿa's persuasion, ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Kawwāʾ, along with 500 members of the Kharijite forces, abandoned their ranks and joined Imam ʿAlī (a) and his companions.[4]

After Imam ʿAlī (a) was struck by Ibn Muljam and while he was in his home, Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣawḥān visited to inquire about his condition. Since no one was allowed to meet Imam ʿAlī (a), Ṣaʿṣaʿa sent him a message, saying: "O Commander of the Faithful, may God's mercy encompass you in life and in death. By God, your heart holds a great place for your Lord, and you possess deep knowledge of His essence." When this message reached Imam ʿAlī (a), he replied: "May God's mercy be upon you, for you have been truly low in harm and abundant in benefit."[5]

After Imam ʿAlī (a)

Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣawḥān was among the companions of Imam ʿAlī (a) who were brought to the court of Muʿāwiya. Reports of these meetings highlight Ṣaʿṣaʿa's criticisms of Muʿāwiya and his rule.[6] In one account, during one such session, Muʿāwiya asked those present about the best of the people. Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣawḥān, pointing to Imam al-Ḥasan (a), replied:

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1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 57.
2. Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ*, 4: 202; see also Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma wa l-siyāsa*, 1: 142.
3. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5: 63.
4. See Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 353-55.
5. Abū al-Faraj, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 50.
6. See e.g., Ḍubbī, *Akhbār al-wāfidīn*, 29-32, 51-53; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 20, 177; Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 3: 40-43.

"[The best person] is this person here in your presence. His grandfather is the Messenger of God, his grandmother is Khadīja bt. Khuwaylid, his father is ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a), and his mother is Fāṭima. His paternal uncle is Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib, his paternal aunt is Umm Hānī bt. Abī Ṭālib, and his maternal aunt is Zaynab, the daughter of the Messenger of God."[1]

In another report, it is mentioned that after Imam al-Ḥasan (a) made peace with Muʿāwiya, he requested safety for several individuals, including Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣawḥān. When Muʿāwiya entered Kufa, he summoned Ṣaʿṣaʿa and, noting that he had never wished to grant him safety, demanded that he ascend the pulpit and curse ʿAlī. Ṣaʿṣaʿa went up to the pulpit and declared: "O people, I have come from a man whose evil precedes him and whose goodness trails behind. He has commanded me to curse ʿAlī—so curse him [Muʿāwiya], and may God curse him!" Realizing that Ṣaʿṣaʿa's intent was to target him, Muʿāwiya ordered him to ascend the pulpit again and explicitly name ʿAlī (a) in his curse. For the second time, Ṣaʿṣaʿa stood on the pulpit and proclaimed: "O people, the caliph has commanded me to curse ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a). Whoever curses ʿAlī, curse him instead!" The people responded with a resounding "Amen." When Muʿāwiya learned of this, he ordered Ṣaʿṣaʿa's exile.[2]

Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣawḥān passed away during Muʿāwiya's caliphate, either in Kūfa or in exile in the al-Jazīra region.[3] He was regarded as one of the most eloquent and articulate Arabs.[4] Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) said about him: "No one [truly] recognized the right of the Commander of the Faithful [Imam ʿAlī (a)] except Ṣaʿṣaʿa and his companions."[5] Some Shiite scholars have authored works on the life of Ṣaʿṣaʿa.[6]

Kumayl b. Ziyād (d. 82/701)

Kumayl b. Ziyād traced his lineage into the al-Nakhaʿ tribe. Given that his martyrdom is recorded in 82/701 at the age of 70, it is likely that he lived during the Prophet's time. Nevertheless, he is classified among the *tābiʿūn* (companions of the Prophet's companions). Kumayl was one of the Kufans who protested against ʿUthmān's policies, leading to his exile to the Levant. During Imam ʿAlī's caliphate, he served as one of the

1. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 30-31.
2. Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 68-69.
3. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 244; ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, 3: 373.
4. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 123; Ibn al-Faqīh, *al-Buldān*, 256.
5. Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 68.
6. Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 244.

Imam's governors and participated in the Battle of Ṣiffīn. Ultimately, in 82/701, he was martyred by al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, the governor of Iraq.[1]

During the Caliphs' Era

There is no available information about Kumayl's life during the caliphates of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. However, during ʿUthmān's caliphate, he was among those who objected to the caliph's policies, which led to his exile to the Levant.[2] When the protests against ʿUthmān intensified in Medina, Kumayl was one of the first Kufans to publicly declare him as unfit for the caliphate.[3] According to some reports, he was among the prominent Kufans who traveled to Medina to voice their objections.[4] During the protests, ʿUthmān reportedly struck Kumayl, prompting him to demand retribution (*qiṣāṣ*). However, after some time, Kumayl forgave the caliph and relinquished his claim.[5]

During Imam ʿAlī's Reign

Kumayl b. Ziyād is described as one of the devout worshippers and ascetics who pledged allegiance to Imam ʿAlī (a) early on.[6] Although some sources mention his participation in the Battle of Ṣiffīn,[7] historical records provide no details about the details of his presence in the battle. Kumayl served as the governor of the Hit region in northern Iraq under Imam ʿAlī (a). In 39/695, during the raids carried out by Levantine forces, Muʿāwiya ordered an attack on the al-Jazīra region. In response, Kumayl supported the governor of the area and successfully defeated the Levantine forces.[8]

After Imam ʿAlī (a)

In 82/701–2, Ibn al-Ashʿath led a rebellion against al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, the governor of Iraq.[9] According to some reports, Kumayl b. Ziyād fought alongside Ibn al-Ashʿath in this uprising and commanded a contingent of Quran reciters (*al-Qurrāʾ*).[10] After the defeat of Ibn al-Ashʿath's uprising, Kumayl fled Kufa, leading to the deprivation of his close

1. See Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 217; ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, 5: 485-86.
2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4: 323.
3. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 5: 517.
4. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 5: 24.
5. Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, 3: 1066.
6. Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, 108.
7. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 6: 217.
8. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 2: 474-75.
9. Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 287-88.
10. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 6: 350.

associates from governmental stipends. Distressed by their deprivation, Kumayl surrendered himself to al-Ḥajjāj. When al-Ḥajjāj saw him, he said, "I have long sought the chance to seize you." Kumayl replied, "Do not bare your fangs at me, nor roar against me, for by God, nothing remains of my life but the remnants of dust motes. So carry out whatever you intend, for our meeting is with God, and after the killing comes the reckoning. Indeed, the Commander of the Faithful ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) had informed me that you would be my killer." Enraged by these words, al-Ḥajjāj accused Kumayl of involvement in the killing of ʿUthmān and ordered his execution. Kumayl was then beheaded, attaining martyrdom.[1]

Kumayl b. Ziyād is regarded as one of Imam ʿAlī's close companions,[2] and several of the Imam's wise and admonitory statements addressed to him are recorded in the sources.[3] One of the most significant prayers transmitted by Kumayl is the supplication known as *Duʿāʾ al-Kumayl*. This prayer, filled with profound expressions of acknowledgment of God's power, majesty, and might, was taught to Kumayl b. Ziyād by Imam ʿAlī (a).[4]

1. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 327; see also Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, 2: 350-51.
2. Mufīd, *al-ikhtiṣāṣ*, 7.
3. See e.g., Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 205-6; Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 147.
4. See Ṭūsī, *Miṣbāḥ al-mutihajjid*, 2: 844-50; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*, 2: 706-10.

Imam ʿAlī (a) and Theological Teachings*

Introduction

A distinguishing characteristic of Imami Shiism compared to Sunni sects and denominations is that, following the demise of the Prophet (s), it derives its religious teachings and rulings from an infallible source known as the "Imam." The Imam serves as the Prophet's successor in guiding and leading the Muslim community. He is responsible for elucidating authentic Islamic teachings and correcting the distortions that arose from entrusting the caliphate to those unworthy of it. Alongside the Quran and the Prophetic tradition, the Imams (a) are considered a source of religious legislation. Each Imam (a), in response to the needs of his time and the prevalent issues of his era, has contributed to the explanation and clarification of aspects of Islamic teachings.

This study begins with a brief overview of the theological characteristics of Imam ʿAlī's era and highlights the doctrinal and theological challenges of that period, and then categorizes Imam ʿAlī's statements into various theological categories, which follow the well-known classification of Imami theological principles: monotheism (*tawḥīd*), divine justice, prophethood, imamate, and resurrection. The primary criterion for selecting and organizing the relevant hadiths under these categories has been their transmission in early and authoritative sources of Shiite hadith.

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* Khaghani, Mohammadreza al-. "Adwār al-Imām ʿAlī (a) fī al-ta'sīs al-Kalamī (11-40 AH)." In *Tārīkh ʿilm al-Kalām*, 2: 21-81. Najaf: al-Markaz al-Islāmī li l-Dirāsāt al-Istrātījiyya, 2023.

Throughout different periods, there have been scholars who compiled works titled *Musnad Imām ʿAlī* (*a*), collecting hadiths attributed to Amīr al-Muʾminīn, Imam ʿAlī (a), based on Shiite sources. Among the most significant works in this field are: *Musnad al-Imām ʿAlī* (*a*) by Sayyid Ḥasan al-Qubbānjī (d. 1990), *Musnad al-Imām Amīr al-Muʾminīn Abī l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib* (*a*) by Azizullāh ʿAtārudī (d. 2014), and *Mawsūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib* (*a*) *fī l-kitāb wa l-sunna wa l-tārīkh* (Encyclopedia of Imam ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) in the Quran, the Tradition, and history) and *Mawsūʿat al-ʿaqāʾid al-Islāmiyya* (Encyclopedia of Islamic beliefs) by Muḥammad Muḥammadī Reyshahrī (d. 2022). Alongside *Nahj al-Balagha*, these works serve as primary sources for the present study.[1]

An Overview of the Theological Context during Imam ʿAlī's Era

After the Prophet's demise, the Islamic community faced various doctrinal and theological challenges. Some of these challenges had internal religious origins, while others emerged due to the expansion of Islamic rule through conquests, bringing Muslims into closer contact with followers of other religions.

Among the internal doctrinal challenges faced by the nascent Islamic community after the Prophet's death were disputes such as those concerning the leadership of the Muslim community and the succession of the Prophet (s), as well as the controversy over issuing a ruling of apostasy against those who refused to pay *zakāt* during the Ridda Wars. On the other hand, external doctrinal challenges originated outside the Islamic community. The introduction of diverse intellectual traditions into the Islamic world—resulting from territorial expansion and the encounter with diverse beliefs—confronted Muslims with new and somewhat unprecedented questions. Prominent Companions of the Prophet, including Imam ʿAlī (a), addressed these inquiries through debates with Jewish and Christian interlocutors on doctrinal matters.

The doctrinal and theological challenges during Imam ʿAlī's era were not yet recognized under the formal discipline of "*Kalām*" (theology) and had not been structured or codified. The theological questions of that time were largely influenced by the political and social issues of the day. For this reason, the theological problems of this period can be described as "political theology." The primary motivation behind engaging in theological discussions was their tangible and practical implications. From this perspective, topics such as faith (*īmān*) and disbelief (*kufr*) and imamate dominated theological debates of the era. Theological discourse was conducted orally, taking the

1. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to the esteemed teacher, Dr. Sayyid Hāshim al-Mīlānī, for generously sharing his personal manuscripts on the topic.

form of sermons, debates, and public appeals (*al-munāshadāt*). These disputations encompassed specific issues.[1]

One of the defining features of Imam ʿAlī's era was the simultaneous presence of both internal and external religious challenges. Moreover, historical events and the disputes surrounding them formed the core of later theological sects, which, in subsequent periods, developed into structured theological systems. Imam ʿAlī's era witnessed one of the greatest disagreements among Muslims over the politico-theological issue of imamate. Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/936) identified imamate as one of the earliest points of contention among Muslims.[2] Al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) underscored this by stating, "The greatest dispute within the Islamic community is over imamate, for no sword has been drawn in Islam over any religious principle as much as it has been drawn over imamate in every era."[3] Imamate was not the only point of contention among Muslims. Disputes over various issues led to the emergence of different intellectual and religious denominations and sects. Among these were disagreements over the permissibility of waging war against those who refused to pay *zakāt* and whether they should be declared apostates, the appointment of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb as successor after Abū Bakr, the six-member council established by ʿUmar to select a caliph, the actions of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, public protests against him that led to his assassination, and the revolts of the People of the Camel (*Jamal*), the Kharijites, and Muʿāwiya against Imam ʿAlī (a) after the people had pledged allegiance to him.[4] All of these can be categorized as internal doctrinal challenges.

Regarding external doctrinal challenges, historical sources indicate that after the Prophet's demise, delegations and groups of Jewish and Christian representatives traveled to Medina. Their visits prompted various theological questions and led to debates. Additionally, during this period, Islamic conquests rapidly expanded Muslim territories. The borders of the Islamic state extended eastward to Herat and Sind, westward to the Egyptian desert, northward to Armenia, and southward to Aden.[5] The native inhabitants of these regions adhered to diverse religions—Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Manicheans, and followers of other faiths—who now encountered Islam as a new religion. While Muslims had previously engaged in theological discussions with

1. See Subḥānī, "Kalāmi Imāmiyya: Rīsha-hā wa Rūyish-hā," 14-15.
2. Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, 2.
3. Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa l-niḥal*, 1: 31.
4. See Ibid., 1: 33-35.
5. See Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*.

Jews and Christians, they were now facing new doctrinal horizons and challenges. Based on the debates recorded in historical and hadith sources from this period, it is evident that most discussions took place between Muslims and Jews, Christians, and *zanādiqa* (disbelievers). The primary topics of these debates revolved around monotheism, divine justice, divine attributes, and prophethood.

The majority of theological hadiths transmitted from Imam ʿAlī (a) can be found in his sermons and letters. These statements, most of which were delivered during his caliphate, affirm the oral nature of theological discourse in that era and indicate that theological issues were explained publicly within the community. While some theological discussions exist in hadiths that were not publicly declared, none of them encompass the overarching themes and core principles of theology. This underscores the deep connection between *kalām* and the intellectual challenges of societies in every era.

Problems Related to God and Monotheism

Calling people to monotheism was one of the primary objectives of Islam. The Prophet (s) spared no effort or sacrifice in pursuit of this goal and in upholding the doctrine of divine unity. A fundamental aspect of his mission was combating idolatry and eradicating it from the Arabian Peninsula. For this reason, monotheism is the most frequently discussed topic in Prophetic hadith. Thanks to the Prophet's efforts, the Islamic society of Imam ʿAlī's era had embraced monotheism as the fundamental principle of religion. However, this did not mean that there was no need to reinforce or elaborate on the doctrine. Numerous hadiths from Imam ʿAlī (a) related to monotheism can be found in Islamic sources. Many of these hadiths appear in the context of debates with Jewish and Christian interlocutors who had traveled to Medina in search of the true successor of the Prophet (s).[1]

Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) played a central role in articulating the principles of monotheism and divine justice. What later theologians (*mutakallumūn*) expounded on these subjects is, in essence, an elaboration and interpretation of Imam ʿAlī's statements on these matters. Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044) writes on this topic: "Know that the principles of monotheism and divine justice are derived from the sermons and statements of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) ... Whoever closely examines the hadiths transmitted from him will realize that what later theologians have authored is nothing but a detailed exposition of those statements and a commentary on those principles."[2]

1. See e.g. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 218.
2. Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, 1: 148.

Knowledge of God

Imam ʿAlī (a) repeatedly emphasized in his sermons that "The first part of religion is knowledge of God."[1] He is also reported to have said: "The fruit of knowledge is knowing God";[2] "The knowledge of the Immaculate God is the highest form of knowledge";[3] and "If death were to take me in childhood and I were admitted to Paradise without knowing my Lord, I would not be content."[4]

Many Quranic verses emphasize the innate nature of the knowledge of God,[5] and Prophetic hadiths similarly affirm that the knowledge of God is embedded in innate human nature.[6] Following this principle, Imam ʿAlī (a) also underscored this insight in his supplications, stating: "O God, You created hearts by Your will and created intellects with innate knowledge of You";[7] "Praise be to the One who inspired His servants to express gratitude to Him and instilled within them the innate knowledge of His Lordship."[8] This innate knowledge of God manifests in times of hardship and need. When asked about the meaning of *Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* (In the Name of Allah, the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful), Imam ʿAlī, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a), replied: "Allah is the One to whom people turn in moments of necessity and distress."[9]

Among the hadiths that indicate the innate nature of the knowledge of God are those related to the concept of *ʿĀlam al-Dharr* (the Primordial World of the Covenant). In a hadith from al-Aṣbagh b. Nubāta, Imam ʿAlī (a), when asked whether God had spoken to anyone besides Moses, he replied:

> "Indeed, God has spoken to all of His creation, both the righteous and the wicked, and they have responded to His exalted being … Have you not read in the Book of God, where He says to His Prophet (s): 'When your Lord took from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants and made them bear witness over themselves, [He said to them,] 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yes indeed! We bear witness." (Q 7:172). Thus, He made His words reach them, and they responded to Him, just as you now hear … He said to them: 'Indeed I am Allah—there is no

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 1.
2. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, 326.
3. Ibid., 712.
4. Abū Nuʿaym, *Ḥulyat al-awliyāʾ*, 1: 74.
5. See e.g. (Q 30: 30, 2: 138, 22: 31, 31: 31, 39: 35).
6. See e.g. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 13.
7. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Muhaj al-daʿawāt*, 120.
8. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 139.
9. Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd*, 231.

> god except Me' (Q 20:14), and 'I am the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate.' So they all acknowledged His divinity and Lordship."[1]

In another hadith, Imam ʿAlī (a) referred to this verse and stated: "When [the people] acknowledged obedience [to God] and that He is their Lord and they are His servants, He took from them a covenant concerning pilgrimage to His Sacred House."[2]

Another stage in Imam ʿAlī's exposition of the knowledge of God is recognizing God's existence through His signs and effects. When asked how he had come to know his Lord, he replied: "I recognized [God] through the weakening of determinations and the fading of concerns. Whenever I was overcome with sorrow, and then it subsided, or whenever I firmly resolved to accomplish something, yet [divine] decree opposed my intent [and prevented me], I realized that there is a planner of affairs beyond myself."[3]

In response to a question from the Christian Catholicos about how he recognized God, Imam ʿAlī (a) said: "I did not come to know God [through] Muḥammad (s); rather, I came to know Muḥammad (s) [through knowledge of] God, the Almighty and Glorious. When He created him and set limits for him, including length and breadth, I realized that [the Prophet (s)] was one who was designated [by God] and created imbued with divine guidance and inspiration."[4]

Elsewhere, Imam ʿAlī (a) stated that he knew God as God had made Himself known to him. Describing how this happened, he said:

> "No form resembles Him, He cannot be perceived by the senses, nor can He be compared to human beings. He is near in His distance and distant in His nearness. He is above all things, yet nothing is above Him. He is before all things, yet nothing is before Him. He is within all things, but not in the way that something is contained within something else; and He is outside all things, but not in the way that something is external to something else. Exalted is He who is as such, for none other is such, while everything else has a beginning."[5]

ʿAlī (a) considered the knowledge of God to be attained through the indication of His signs and effects.[6] Thus, he repeatedly stated, "Know God through God Himself."[7]

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1. ʿAyyāshī, *Tafsīr*, 2: 41.
2. Ibid., 2: 38.
3. Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd*, 288; see also Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 250.
4. Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd*, 286-87.
5. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 85-86; Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd*, 285.
6. See Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 224-25; Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 1: 209.
7. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 85.

In ʿAlī's words, another path to knowing God is introduced—through recognition of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) (the Prophet's Family). In one of his sermons, he stated: "We are the guides only through whom God can be known … For had God, the Blessed and Exalted, willed, He would have made Himself known to the people so that they would recognize Him, affirm His oneness, and approach Him through His gate. However, He made us His gates, His path, His way, and the door through which He is to be approached."[1]

Although God cannot be seen with the eyes, His invisibility is not a reason to deny His existence. This is a point that Imam ʿAlī (a) emphasized in a sermon, stating: "Praise God, who is concealed in unseen mysteries but confirmed by clear signs. He is hidden from the keenest observer, yet the eye that does not see him cannot deny his existence, while the heart that acknowledges him cannot comprehend him … Creation bears witness to the creator and compels the denier to acknowledge him in his heart"[2]

The Commander of the Faithful (a) pointed out that God is not seen with the physical eye, but with the eye of the heart and the essence of faith. In response to a question about whether he had seen God, he said: "I am not one to worship someone whom I have not seen … The eyes have not seen Him, but the eyes of the heart, through the truth of faith, have seen Him."[3] In another statement, responding to a question from a Jewish individual about whether the Prophet (s) saw God, he said: "The [divine] light covered his eyes, and therefore, he only perceived the greatness of his Lord with his heart, not with his eyes."[4] Also, in a prayer he taught to Nawf al-Bikālī, it is said: "O God, the eyes of the onlookers have reached their limit in seeing You through the secrets of the hearts."[5]

Proofs for God's Existence

In the journey toward the knowledge of God, the role of reason and rational arguments cannot be denied. For this reason, Muslim theologians throughout history have sought to establish rational proofs for the existence of God. One such proof presented by theologians is the "argument from design" (*burhān al-naẓm*). This argument suggests that reason, upon observing the order in nature and the firmness of the structure of being, inevitably concludes the necessity of a Creator.

1. Ṣaffār, *Baṣā'ir*, 497.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 49.
3. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 224-25.
4. Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 1: 220.
5. Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 91: 95.

Imam ʿAlī (a) said in this regard: "I am amazed by one who doubts God when he can see God's creation."[1] In another sermon, he stated: "All praise is due to Allah, who is concealed from the hidden things yet evident in intellects through the signs of His design seen in His creation. When the prophets were asked about Him, they did not describe Him by limits or parts but rather by His actions, and guided others to Him through His signs. The minds of thinkers cannot deny Him, for He is the One who created the heavens and the earth, all that is within them and between them. He is their Maker, and there is no resisting His power."[2] In yet another sermon, Imam ʿAlī (a), referring to the signs and indications that attest to the existence of God, said: "He showed us his powerful kingdom, the wonders articulated in the traces of his wisdom, and the world's frank admission that it needs his strong grip to remain standing— thereby he provided the proof that compels us to acknowledge him. Traces of his artisanship and signs of his wisdom can be seen in the marvels he made. Everything he created offers proof of his existence and guides us to him, even silent objects, for their design speaks of that proof, and it guides us toward their creator."[3]

In a supplication narrated from Imam ʿAlī (a), upon sighting the new moon, he addressed the moon, saying: "O obedient creation, swift in movement, traversing the orbit of divine design, settling in the stations decreed for you. I believe in Him who, through you, illuminated the darkness, made the obscure clear, and made you a sign of His sovereignty and power. He assigned you to increase and decrease, rise and set, shine and eclipse, all while you remain obedient to Him and hasten toward His will. Exalted is He, how excellent is His governance, and how perfect is what He has fashioned in His dominion!"[4] The Commander of the Faithful (a) would also frequently recite this supplication upon completing his night prayers: "[O God,] I bear witness that the heavens and the earth and all that lies between them are signs guiding towards You and testimonies affirming what You call to. Everything that conveys Your proof and bears witness to Your Lordship is marked by the traces of Your blessings and imprinted with the signs of Your wisdom in governance."[5]

Another argument put forth by theologians to prove the existence of God is the "argument from origination" (*burhān al-ḥudūth*). Reason, upon observing the emergence

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 126.
2. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 141.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 91.
4. Ṣadūq, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, 2: 101.
5. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 20: 255.

and creation of various entities in this world, recognizes the necessity of a Creator and an Originator for them. Since, according to the principle of causation, the entire universe is originated, it must have a Creator.

Imam ʿAlī (a) alludes to this in his statements, saying: "Praise God … He proves his antiquity by the newness of his creatures. By the newness of his creatures, he proves his existence, and by their similarities, he proves that he has no peer. He is true to his promise, rises above any wrong to his servants, upholds equity among his creatures, and is just when he commands. The newness of all things testifies to his eternity, the incapacity he has marked them with testifies to his power, and the annihilation he has subjugated them to testifies to his permanence."[1] In another statement, the Imam (a) said: "The firmness in the craftsmanship of His creations is sufficient as a sign. The nature He has instilled in them is enough to lead to Him. The origination of creation is sufficient to indicate His eternality, and the perfection in their making is enough for taking a lesson."[2]

Another argument presented by theologians to prove the existence of God is the so-called "argument from motion," which is again based on the principle of causation. This argument states that since everything in the universe is in motion and constantly transitioning from one state to another, this motion and transformation must necessitate a mover and changer. In the hadiths attributed to Imam ʿAlī (a), there is a reference to this point. The Imam (a) states: "Motion does not occur in Him, nor can He be considered a part of something or connected to anything. How can something befall Him when He Himself is its creator? How can He return to something when He is its originator? Or how can an event occur in Him when He Himself has brought it into existence?"[3]

Knowing the Core of God's Essence

It is impossible to understand and attain knowledge of the core of God's essence, for a finite intellect can never grasp the infinite divine essence or attain complete knowledge of it. This idea has been repeatedly emphasized in Imam ʿAlī's words. Regarding God, the Commander of the Faithful (a) has stated: "Imaginations and thoughts cannot reach the core of His essence, nor can understanding and perception encompass Him. The mind is incapable of likening Him to anything. The aspirations of intellects to comprehend Him have turned into despair, and the vast oceans of knowledge have dried up and sunk into

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 185; see also Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 139-40.
2. Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd*, 71.
3. Ibn Shuʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 67.

the earth, unable to point toward Him. The severity of His enemies has been humbled before the majesty of His power."[1]

In a sermon, Imam ʿAlī (a) addressed God, saying: "We offer you praise in sums that never end and gifts that never run out. We do not know the essence of your majesty. All we know is that you are alive, existent, neither slumber overtakes you nor sleep, neither glances perceive you nor eyes."[2] In another sermon, he states: "Praise God! He has revealed traces of his authority and the magnificence of his majesty—their mighty wonders dazzle the intellect's eyes and prevent the soul's flashing thoughts from plumbing the depths of his attributes."[3] In yet another, he acknowledges: "For you are God. Intellects with their penetrating thoughts cannot analyze your totality, nor hearts with their reflections limit or position you."[4] Another sermon suggests: "Intellects cannot delineate his boundaries—he can never be likened to another. Imaginations cannot capture him—he can never be pictured as another."[5] The Imam (a) stated in another passage: "The profound paths of contemplation are left bewildered in His dominion, and comprehensive interpretations fall short of firmly grasping His knowledge. Hidden veils obstruct access to His concealed mysteries, and the loftiest intellects become lost in the lowest depths of His subtlest affairs. Blessed is God, whom neither the heights of ambition can reach nor the depths of acumen attain."[6]

Among the hadiths transmitted from Imam ʿAlī, the Commander of the Faithful (a), there are statements that prohibit speculation about the divine essence. At times, this prohibition is stated explicitly, as when he said: "Whoever contemplates the essence of God will become a disbeliever."[7] And: "Whoever reflects on the essence of God will become an unbeliever."[8] At other times, Imam ʿAlī (a) alludes to this matter indirectly, saying: "His eternity lies beyond the reach of thought, and the permanence of His existence is inaccessible to the loftiest intellects."[9] Ultimately, Imam ʿAlī (a) defines the zenith of human contemplation on the divine essence as follows: "The utmost realization

1. Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd*, 70.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 160.
3. Ibid., sermon 195.
4. Ibid., sermon 91.
5. Ibid., sermon 155.
6. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 134-35.
7. Ibid., 8: 22.
8. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, 618.
9. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 140.

for anyone who deeply reflects on the knowledge of the Almighty Creator is to confess their inability to comprehend it."[1]

Divine Unicity and Its Levels

In the hadiths attributed to Imam ʿAlī (a), great emphasis is placed on the importance of the belief in divine unicity (*tawḥīd*). He describes the phrase *Lā ilāha illa Allāh* (there is no deity except Allah) as the key to unlocking the gates of the heavens.[2] At times, he states: "Monotheism is the life of the soul."[3] And elsewhere, he explains: "The first part of religion is knowledge of God. Knowledge of him is perfected by belief in him. Belief in him is perfected by the declaration of his oneness."[4] Regarding the reward for one who utters *Lā ilāha illa Allāh*, the Imam (a) states: "Whoever sincerely says *Lā ilāha illa Allāh*, his sins will be erased just as black ink is wiped from white parchment. If he says it a second time with sincerity, before it reaches the Divine Throne, the Majestic Lord will declare: 'Stop! By My might and glory, I shall forgive the one who uttered you, regardless of what they have done.'"[5] Imam ʿAlī (a) narrates many hadiths from the Prophet (s) on this subject. Among them are the following: "The reward for one upon whom God has bestowed the blessing of monotheism is nothing but Paradise";[6] "Indeed, *Lā ilāha illa Allāh* is a great and noble phrase before God, the Almighty. Whoever sincerely utters it is deserving of Paradise, and whoever falsely utters it, his life and wealth are protected, but his final abode shall be the Fire";[7] and "Whoever utters *Lā ilāha illa Allāh* during the night or day will have all the sins recorded in his scroll wiped away."[8]

Divine unicity has various levels, including "essential unicity" (*al-tawḥīd al-dhātī*) and "unity of actions" (*al-tawḥīd al-afʿālī*).

Essential unicity

The first level of divine unicity is the oneness of God's essence, meaning that God Almighty is unique and has no partner. In response to a desert dweller who asked about God's oneness, Imam ʿAlī (a) said:

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1. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 20: 292.
2. Ṣadūq, *al-Kiṣāl*, 2: 456.
3. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, 37.
4. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 1.
5. Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 1: 260.
6. Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd*, 22-23.
7. Ibid., 23.
8. Ibid., 23.

> "The discourse on God's oneness falls into four categories: two of them are inapplicable to God, while the other two are affirmed for Him. As for the two inapplicable categories: The first is when one says 'one' in the sense of numerical enumeration. This does not apply to God, for that which has no second cannot be counted. Have you not seen that one who says 'the third of three' has committed disbelief? [The second is] when one describes God as 'one' in the sense of being a member of a species under a broader genus. This [too] is impermissible, for it implies resemblance, and our Lord is far above such comparison. As for the two categories that are affirmed for Him: [The first is] to declare that He is One, having no likeness among created things—this is how our Lord is. [The second is] to affirm that He is absolutely unique in essence, meaning that He is indivisible in existence, intellect, and perception—this is how our Lord is."[1]

The Imam (a), emphasizing God's oneness, stated in another remark: "Truly, God, the Almighty and Glorious, is One and Unique, absolutely singular in His oneness."[2] In his counsel to his son while reasoning about God's oneness, Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a) also said: "Know that if your Lord had a partner, his messengers would have come to you. You would have seen the evidence of that deity's kingship and power and recognized his actions and attributes."[3]

In another hadith from Imam ʿAlī (a), he interprets and explains the meaning of *Lā ilāha illa Allāh* in the call to prayer (*adhān*), stating:

> "[The declaration of *Lā ilāha illa Allāh* in the *adhān*] signifies that bearing witness to it is not valid without heartfelt knowledge. It is as if it proclaims: Know that there is no deity except God, the Almighty and Glorious, and that any supposed deity besides Him is false. With my tongue, I affirm what my heart has come to know—that there is no god but Allah. I testify that there is no refuge from God except in Him, and no salvation from evil and tribulation except through Him. The second testimony to God's oneness in the *adhān* means that I bear witness that there is no guide, no one who directs to the true religion, except Allah. I call upon God as my witness that there is no Lord except Him. I also call upon the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth, all that lies between them—including angels and humans, mountains and trees, animals and beasts, all that is dry and all that is wet—to bear witness that there is no lord, no sustainer, no deity, no one who can bring harm or benefit, no one who restricts or overwhelms, no one who

1. Ibid., 83-84.
2. ʿAlawī, *al-Manāqib*, 113-14.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 31; see also Ibn Shuʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 72-73.

> grants or withholds, no advisor, no guide, no provider of sufficiency or healing, no first and no last—except Allah. Creation and command belong to Him alone, and all goodness rests in His hands. Blessed is God, the Lord of all worlds."[1]

Unity of attributes

This level of divine unicity means that God's attributes are identical to His essence and have no existence separate from Him. Thus, divine attributes are not distinct from His being. Imam ʿAlī (a) refers to this concept in one of his sermons, stating:

> "The foundation of worshiping God is knowing Him, and the essence of knowing Him is affirming His oneness. The key to true monotheism is negating any form of comparison or likeness to Him. He is far beyond having attributes befalling Him, for reason testifies that anything in which attributes reside is contingent and created. [However,] reason affirms that He, glorified be His majesty, is the Creator and not a creation. His existence is proven through His creation, knowledge of Him is established through reason, and His proof is affirmed through contemplation and reflection. He has made creation a sign of Himself, unveiling His lordship through it. He is the One and Only from eternity past, with no partner in His divinity and no equal in His lordship. Through His differentiation from all opposites, it is known that He has no opposite, and through His distinction from all things comparable, it is known that He has no counterpart."[2]

Unity of actions

The unity of actions means that everything occurring in the world is under God's command and will. The Commander of the Faithful, Imam ʿAlī (a), stated in his sermon on monotheism: "He knew what He created, and He created what He knew—not through contemplation upon newfound knowledge that affected what He created, nor due to any doubt regarding what He did not create. Rather, it was a definitive decree, perfected knowledge, and an exact command. He was singular in His lordship and exclusively assigned oneness to Himself."[3] In another sermon delivered at Ṣiffīn, he said: "Indeed, I and you are nothing but servants in the possession of the will of the Lord, other than whom there is none. He alone is the Owner of that which we neither own nor have any will or authority over."[4]

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1. Ṣadūq, *Maʿānī l-akhbār*, 39.
2. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 223-24.
3. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 136.
4. Ibid., 8: 357.

As previously mentioned, ʿAlī (a), in an argumentative remark on the unity of actions, stated: "Through God's creation, He is recognized; through reason, knowledge of Him is affirmed; and through contemplation, His proof is established. He has made creation a sign pointing to Him, thereby unveiling His lordship. He is the One, the Absolute, in His eternity—without a partner in His divinity and without an equal."[1] Similarly, in reasoning about God's oneness in lordship, it is stated: "God is the Greatest—the Forbearing, the All-Knowing—who, in every category of His wondrous creation and the marvels of His craftsmanship, has placed a clear sign that affirms His lordship. And in every aspect of the mysteries of His decree and the perfection of His design, there is an evident proof and a just witness that testify to His oneness."[2] In a sermon affirming the singularity of God in lordship, he stated: "And if you were to follow the path of your thought to its logical end, you would infer that the maker of the ant is also the maker of the honeybee. Every creature has subtle particulars, and every living being has imperceptible variances, but with regard to their being created, the large, the slight, the heavy, the light, the strong, the weak, all are the same—all are God's creatures."[3]

Monotheism in worship

Monotheism in worship (*al-tawḥīd al-ʿibādī*) means that there is no deity worthy of worship except the Lord of all worlds, and He alone deserves devotion and servitude. Imam ʿAlī (a) said in this regard: "True worship is that a servant desires nothing but their Lord and fears nothing but their own sins."[4] In another statement, he said: "Blessed is the one who dedicates their worship and supplication solely to God, does not let their heart become preoccupied with what their eyes perceive, is not distracted from remembering God by what their ears hear, and does not grieve over what has been given to others."[5]

Divine Names and Attributes

In a discussion of divine names and attributes, ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī writes:

> "There is no difference between a name (*ism*) and an attribute (*ṣifa*) except that an attribute signifies a meaning that the essence is characterized by and possesses—whether it is identical to the essence or distinct from it—whereas a name indicates the essence as it is described by that attribute. Thus, "life" (*ḥayāt*)

1. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 223-24.
2. Kafʿamī, *al-Balad al-amīn*, 112-13.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 185.
4. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, 122.
5. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 16.

> and "knowledge" (*ʿilm*) are attributes, while "the Living" (*ḥayy*) and "the Knowing" (*ʿālim*) are names. Since words serve only to signify meanings and unveil them, the true reality of an attribute or a name is that which the word reveals. Accordingly, the reality of "life"—that which the word *ḥayāt* denotes in relation to God—is a divine attribute that is identical to His essence, and the reality of the essence to which life is identical is a divine name. From this perspective, both *ḥayy* (the Living) and *ḥayāt* (life) can be considered names for both the name and the attribute, even though in relation to the previous distinction, one is the name and the other is the attribute."[1]

On this account, there is no fundamental difference between the divine names and attributes.

Regarding the specification and number of the divine names, apart from what has been narrated from the Prophet (s), no report has been transmitted from Imam ʿAlī (a).[2] However, it is narrated from Imam ʿAlī (a) that he said: "There is no letter [or word] except that it is one of the names of God, the Almighty and Glorious." Later in this same hadith, the Imam (a) provides an interpretation of the letters of the alphabet, explaining that each letter contains a name or an attribute of God.[3] However, this does not mean that it is permissible to describe God with any attribute or call Him by any name arbitrarily. Rather, the divine names and attributes must be used in accordance with what has been stated in the Quran, the Prophetic tradition, or the words of the infallibles (*maʿṣūmūn*; that is, the Prophet (s) and the twelve Imams). In response to someone who asked about the attributes of God, the Commander of the Faithful (a) said: "See it this way, O seeker: Accept what the Quran tells you about God and seek light from its radiant guidance. As for the questions that Satan burdens you with, questions not mandated for you by the Book or reported in the Prophet's Sunna and the Imams' guidance, consign their knowledge to God. That is God's ultimate right over you."[4] In another statement, Imam ʿAlī (a) forbids the use of analogy in describing the divine attributes and warns against attributing human qualities to God. He said: "Truly, my Lord is of the utmost subtlety, but He cannot be described with [human or worldly] subtlety. He is of the highest greatness and majesty, yet He cannot be characterized by [worldly] grandeur. His

1. Ṭabāṭabāyī, *al-Mīzān*, 7: 352.
2. See Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd*, 194-95.
3. Ibid., 235.
4. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 91.

exaltedness reaches the peak of supremacy, but He is not characterized by [earthly] greatness. His glory is at the highest level, yet it is not defined by coarseness or rigidity."[1]

Human intellect is incapable of grasping the essence of the Almighty and, therefore, cannot adequately describe divine nature. Imam ʿAlī (a) said in this regard: "Glory be to God, just as He has described Himself, while those who attempt to describe Him fall short of doing so."[2] In another statement, it is said: "He has not revealed to intellects his true description"[3] The Commander of the Faithful (a), emphasizing the intellect's inability to comprehend the divine attributes, stated: "How can we who are incapable of describing a creature like us aspire to describe our creator?"[4] In another hadith transmitted from him, it is reported: "One who is incapable of describing a being with form and appendages is even more incapable of describing the creator, far from it."[5]

In several statements, Imam ʿAlī (a) warns against describing God in any way other than what is found in the Quran, the Prophetic tradition, or the words of the Infallibles. He prohibits doing so and states: "Whoever describes God has confined Him, and whoever confines Him has quantified Him. And whoever quantifies Him has negated His eternity."[6] In another statement, it is said:

> "Declaration of his oneness is perfected by sincere allegiance to him. Sincere allegiance to him is achieved by negating all attributes ascribed to him, by the testimony of every attribute that it is separate from the thing described, and by the testimony of each thing described that it is separate from the attribute. To describe God is to ascribe associates to him. To ascribe associates to him is to ascribe duality to him. To ascribe duality to him is to divide him. To divide him is to undervalue him. To undervalue him is to depict him. To depict him is to circumscribe him. To circumscribe him is to quantify him."[7]

These warnings indicate that if one deviates from the attributes by which God has described Himself or by which the Infallibles have described Him, and instead relies on analogy or personal opinion, they will inevitably fall into the error of *tashbīh* (anthropomorphism). Confirming this point, Imam ʿAlī (a) stated: "Whoever relies on

1. Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd*, 308.
2. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 135.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 49.
4. Ibid., sermon 112.
5. Ibid., sermon 163.
6. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 140.
7. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 1.

analogy and personal opinion in the knowledge of God will go astray, and matters will become fragmented [and confused] for them."[1]

The preceding was a selection of Imam ʿAlī's words on monotheism, knowledge of God, and related matters. What stands out is the abundance of these teachings in the form of public sermons. This indicates that the Islamic society during Imam ʿAlī's time—despite having been guided by the Prophetic era or having embraced Islam during the caliphate of his predecessors—was still in great need of Islamic teachings, particularly regarding monotheism. This observation suggests that the Muslim community during the caliphal period had limited exposure to theological and metaphysical teachings. This is further evidenced by the fact that, in various Islamic sources, reports of theological discourse from the caliphs themselves are either absent or exceedingly rare.

Issues of Divine Justice

One of the divine attributes is the Just (*al-ʿAdl*). Since justice is founded upon rational good (*ḥusn*) and evil (*qubḥ*), God, in all aspects of creation and governance, refrains from anything deemed improper and remains just in all matters. Highlighting the goodness of justice and the evilness of oppression, Imam ʿAlī (a) stated: "Indeed, the evilness of oppression is equal to the goodness of justice."[2]

In response to a Jewish man who asked about what does not exist with God, Imam ʿAlī said (a): "Injustice toward His servants does not exist with God."[3] Additionally, in a supplication, he stated: "O Allah, do not deal with me according to what I deserve, for if You do, You will punish me, yet You will not have wronged me. I have reached a state where I fear Your justice, but I do not fear Your oppression. So, O You who are Just and never commit injustice, have mercy on me."[4] In a sermon, he also said: "Praise God! Senses do not grasp him … He is true to his promise, rises above any wrong to his servants, upholds equity among his creatures, and is just when he commands."[5]

Imam ʿAlī (a) described the manifestations of God's justice as follows: "All praise is due to Allah, who lowers and raises … He who, in His justice, has decreed death among His creation."[6] Elsewhere, he stated:

1. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, 667.
2. Ibid., 223.
3. Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd*, 377.
4. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 4: 433.
5. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 185.
6. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 4: 433.

> "Indeed, Allah—exalted is His majesty and sanctified are His names—created His creation and obligated them to worship Him, enjoined them to obey Him, distributed their sustenance among them, and placed them in this world according to His wisdom. He defined their position in religion as He saw fit, while He Himself remains free of any need for them. The obedience of those who obey Him does not benefit Him, nor does the disobedience of those who defy Him harm Him. However, He—glorified be He—knew of their shortcomings in managing their affairs and their inability to maintain righteousness in both their immediate and eventual existence. Therefore, He disciplined them through His command and prohibition, granting them free will and placing upon them only an easy burden. By the justice of His judgment and the wisdom of His decree, He distinguished between those of His creation who hasten toward His pleasure and love, and those who lag behind, relying upon His blessings while disobeying Him. Thus, this is the meaning of the saying of Allah, the Almighty and Glorious: 'Do those who have perpetrated misdeeds suppose that We shall treat them like those who have faith and do righteous deeds, their life and death being equal? Evil is the judgement that they make!' (Q 45:21)"[1]

In a sermon, the Imam (a) stated: "God decreed sustenance, giving some people much and others little, distributing constricted shares to some and ample ones to others. In all this, he was just. He tested those he wished with prosperity and those he wished with poverty to assess the gratitude of the rich and the patience of the poor."[2] The Imam (a) said in another statement: "Indeed, wealth [and worldly possessions] have been distributed and guaranteed among you. A just and fair authority has apportioned it, ensured its provision, and will fulfill it."[3]

Another manifestation of divine justice is God's fairness in judgment and decree. Imam ʿAlī (a) states: "Praise God … his clemency is vast, and he pardoned; he was just in all he ordained."[4] In another statement, he says: "Truth is the most beautiful thing in description and the most expansive in fairness. It never benefits one person without also bearing some burden, nor does it burden someone without also bringing benefit. If it were possible for truth to exist solely in someone's favor without any consequence, it would belong exclusively to God, not His creation, for He has power over His servants

1. Karājakī, *Kanz al-fawā'id*, 1: 89-90.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 91.
3. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 30.
4. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 191.

and is just in every judgment He renders."[1] The Imam (a) also emphasizes this point in concise statements: "[O He] whose judgment is just,"[2] "[He] who, when He judges, does not oppress,"[3] and "His decree is just, and His judgment is righteous."[4]

Just as God has made justice obligatory upon Himself and distanced Himself from oppression, He has also commanded His servants to uphold justice and warned them against acts of injustice. Highlighting this point, Imam ʿAlī (a) stated: "Indeed, God the Immaculate has commanded justice and righteousness and has forbidden wrongdoing and oppression."[5]

Divine Decree and Predestination

Considering the numerous hadiths from Imam ʿAlī(a) on the issue of "divine decree and predestination" (*al-qaḍā' wa l-qadar*) found in hadith and historical sources, it becomes evident that this issue had become a significant and contentious subject during his rule. Given the timing of these inquiries, it appears that the three major battles in which Imam ʿAlī (a) was compelled to engage played a crucial role in raising and intensifying questions regarding divine decree and predestination. Evidence supporting this claim can be found in a report where, following the Battle of Ṣiffīn, an individual posed a question to the Imam on this very matter. The report states:

> After returning from Ṣiffīn, Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) was seated in Kūfa when an elderly man approached him, sat before him, and said: "O Commander of the Faithful, inform us about our journey to the people of al-Shām [the Levant]—was it by God's decree and predestination?" Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) replied: "Indeed, O old man. You did not ascend any hill nor descend into any valley except by God's decree and predestination … yet in none of your states were you coerced or compelled." The old man asked: "How were we not coerced or compelled in our actions when our journey and return were by God's decree and predestination?" The Imam (a) replied: "Do you suppose it was an unalterable decree and an inevitable fate? If that were the case, then reward and punishment, command and prohibition, and divine admonition would all be meaningless. God's promise and warning would be void. No sinner would be blameworthy, nor would any doer of good be praiseworthy. If so, then the sinner would be more deserving of reward than the virtuous, and the righteous would be more worthy of punishment than

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 352-53.
2. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *al-Durūʿ al-wāqiya*, 90, 179.
3. Kafʿamī, *al-Balad al-amīn*, 93.
4. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *al-Durūʿ al-wāqiya*, 88, 178.
5. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, 234.

> the evildoer! This is the belief of the allies of idolaters, the adversaries of the Merciful, the party of Satan, and the Qadariyya [adherents of absolute predestination] and the Magians of this umma. Verily, God the Blessed and Exalted has granted obligation by way of free choice, has forbidden by way of warning, and has granted abundant reward for little effort. He is not disobeyed out of constraint, nor is He obeyed by coercion. He did not create the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in vain, nor did He send the prophets as bearers of glad tidings and warnings in vain 'That is a conjecture of the faithless. So woe to the faithless for the Fire' (Q 38:27)"[1]

This account clearly illustrates the intertwining of the two issues of divine decree and predestination, on the one hand, and compulsion or determinism (*jabr*) and free will (*ikhtiyār*), on the other hand. The question, in fact, arose because some of Imam ʿAlī's companions, despite having no doubt about the righteousness of their cause and the falsehood of the opposing camp in the Levant, found themselves on the losing side of the battlefield. This apparent contradiction led them to question divine decree and predestination—why had divine victory not descended upon those who were in the right? Why had they, ultimately and for whatever reason, left the battlefield in defeat and truce? These questions became a source of intellectual and theological challenge for them. In response, Imām ʿAlī (a) provided an interpretation of divine decree, clarifying its meaning and implications.

> In a hadith transmitted from Imam ʿAlī (a), he interprets divine decree as follows: "[Qaḍāʾ] has 10 different meanings, including fulfilment of a covenant, proclamation, action, obligation, writing, completion, judgment and decree, creation, and death. As for completion in all matters, it is what the Almighty has stated: 'When We dispatched toward you a team of jinn listening to the Quran, when they were in its presence, they said, 'Be silent!' When it was finished [*quḍiya*], they went back to their people as warners' (Q 46:29). It was finished [in the verse] means when he finished doing it. Moreover, [in another verse] it is stated 'And when you finish [*qaḍaytum*] your rites, then remember Allah' (Q 2:200). As for making a covenant, God stated: 'Your Lord has decreed [*qaḍā*] that you shall not worship anyone except Him' (Q 17:23), [where *qaḍā'*] means to make a pledge. Similarly, in [verse 44 of] Surah al-Qaṣaṣ (28), it is said: 'You were not on the western side when We revealed the commandments [*qaḍaynā*] to Moses,' which means when we assigned [prophethood] to him. Proclamation is where Almighty God said 'We apprised [*qaḍynā*] him of the matter that these will be

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, 1: 155-56.

rooted out by dawn' (Q 15:66). In another verse, He said, 'We revealed [*qaḍynā*] to the Children of Israel in the Book: Twice you will cause corruption on the earth' (Q 17:4). This means that, in the Torah, we have proclaimed and announced what they would do. Qaḍā' in the sense of action is what appears in [verse 72 of] Surah Ṭā-Hā (20): 'Decide [*fa-qḍi*] whatever you want to decide,' meaning that you do whatever you wish. Similarly, [verse 44 of] Surah al-Anfāl (8) states, '[it was] in order [*li yaḍiya*] that Allah may carry through a matter that was bound to be fulfilled'; that is, to do an action he already knew. There are many instances of this usage of *Qaḍā'* in the Quran. In the sense of the necessity of divine punishment, [verse 22 of] Surah Ibrāhīm (14) offers an example: 'When the matter is all over [*lammā quḍiya al-amr*], Satan will say'; that is, when punishment became necessary. A similar case is [verse 41 of] Surah Yūsuf (12): 'The matter about which you inquire has been decided [*quḍiya al-amr*],' meaning the thing you were asking about became necessary and was realized. Regarding the written inevitable decree, the Almighty states when relating the story of Mary the daughter of Imran: 'and it is a matter [already] decided [*maqḍiyyā*]' (Q 19:21), which means that [the affair] was definitive and certain. An example of *Qaḍā'* in the sense of completion is what God states in [verse 29 of] Surah al-Qaṣaṣ: 'So when Moses completed [*qaḍā*] the term,' which means When he fulfilled the promise. Another case is Moses's word: 'Whichever of the two terms I complete [*qaḍaytu*], there shall be no imposition upon me' (Q 28:28), meaning when I completed and finished doing it. As for *Qaḍā'* in the sense of decree, God says: 'and judgment will be made between them [*quḍiyat*] with justice, and it will be said, All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds!' (Q 39:75); that is, a decree or judgment was made between them. Another example is God's word in the Quran: 'Allah judges [*yaqḍī*] with justice, while those whom they invoke besides Him do not judge by anything. Indeed it is Allah who is the All-hearing, the All-seeing' (Q 40:20) and 'and judgement will be made [*quḍiya*] between them with justice' (Q 10:54). Regarding *Qaḍā'* in the sense of creation, God the Immaculate states, 'Then He set them up [*qaḍāhunna*] as seven heavens in two days' (Q 41:12), meaning He created it. An example of *Qaḍā'* in the sense of death is the word of the inhabitants of the Hell in [verse 77 of] Surah al-Zukhruf (43): 'They will call out, O Malik! Let your Lord finish [*liyaqḍiya*] us off! He will say, Indeed you will stay on', which means: inflicts death upon us. Another case is: 'they will neither be done away [*lā yuqḍā ʿalayhim*] with so that they may die, nor shall its punishment be lightened for them' (Q 35:36); that is, death is not brought to them until [their divine punishment] is completed. The same appears in the story of Prophet Solomon: 'When We decreed [*qaḍaynā*] death for him, nothing apprised them of his death except a worm

which gnawed away at his staff' (Q 34:14), where the Almighty means: when we sent death to him.[1]

In another hadith, Imam ʿAlī (a) explained the meaning of *qaḍā'* and *qadar*, saying: "The command to obedience and the prohibition from disobedience, the granting of ability to perform good and abstain from evil, assistance in drawing near to Him, and the withholding of aid from those who disobey Him, as well as promises and warnings, encouragement and deterrence—all of these constitute God's decree (*qaḍā'*) in our actions and His predestination (*qadar*) in our deeds. But do not assume beyond this, for mere speculation corrupts one's deeds."[2]

Considering the two previous reports, it becomes evident that the Imam (a) elaborated solely on the meaning of *qaḍā'*, but regarding predestination (*qadar*), he merely stated that it pertains to human actions. In hadiths from Imam ʿAlī (a), one can find prohibitions against delving too deeply into the meaning of *qadar*. At times, the Imam (a) described *qadar* as one of God's divine mysteries. In one report, it is stated:

> "A man approached the Commander of the Faithful (a) and said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, tell me about *qadar*.' He (a) replied, 'It is a deep ocean—do not enter it.' The man said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, tell me about *qadar*.' He replied, 'It is a dark path—do not traverse it.' The man repeated, 'O Commander of the Faithful, tell me about *qadar*.' He replied, 'It is a divine secret—do not burden yourself with it.' Once again, the man insisted, 'O Commander of the Faithful, tell me about *qadar*.' The Imam (a) then said, 'If you insist on your question, then let me ask you: Tell me, was God's mercy established before human actions, or did human actions precede God's mercy?' The man replied, 'God's mercy existed before human actions.' The Imam (a) [then turned to those present and] said, 'Rise and greet your brother, for he has now submitted to faith, whereas before, he was in disbelief'."[3]

Despite the complexity and ambiguity surrounding this hadith, one can infer that contemplating and delving into the nature of *qadar* is a highly perilous endeavor. As the Imam stated, *qadar* is a deep ocean, a dark and obscure path, and a divine secret—one should not seek detailed knowledge of it. In another statement, the Imam (a) further emphasized this point: "Know that *qadar* is one of God's secrets, a veil among His veils,

1. Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 90: 18-20.
2. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 226.
3. Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd*, 365-66.

a fortified stronghold among His strongholds, concealed within the divine veil, hidden from creatures, sealed with God's stamp, and preexisting in His knowledge."[1]

The inevitability of divine decree and predestination are fully manifest in Imam ʿAlī's words. As the Imam (a) stated in a sermon: "Verily, God has firmly established all matters [with His power] and set each in its proper place. Thus, everything runs in accordance with its ordained course, and nothing will reach its destined purpose and ultimate end except through what has been determined by divine decree and predestination. Among the matters that God has ordained and whose decree is irrevocable and complete are the branching of lineages and the causal relationship between causes and their effects."[2] The Commander of the Faithful (a) also wrote in a letter: "Every affair has a consequence. Your destiny will come to you."[3] Elsewhere, he said, "No seeker can outrace you to your sustenance, no oppressor can seize your share, and nothing ordained for you will be slow in coming."[4] Additionally, in brief statements attributed to the Imam (a) on this matter, it is said: "All affairs are humbled before what has been decreed, to the extent that even affliction and hardship take the form of divine planning";[5] "Matters are determined by predestination, not by [human] planning";[6] and "If predestination is inescapable, then caution and anxiety become meaningless."[7]

Belief in the inevitability of divine decree and predestination is fully evident in the life and conduct of Imam ʿAlī (a), as reflected in historical reports about him. In one account, during the Battle of Ṣiffīn, Imam ʿAlī (a) was advised not to enter the battlefield alone and to beware of a surprise attack from the enemy. In response, he said: "The appointed time [of death] is the best guardian. Every person is accompanied by guardian angels who protect him—shielding him from falling into a well, from a wall collapsing on him, or from any harm. But when his appointed time arrives, they will leave him to what is destined to befall him. And so it will be with me—when my time comes, the most wretched of people will rise and dye this with this [pointing to his head and beard]."[8] Similarly, when someone suggested assigning him (a) a guard for protection, he replied:

1. Ibid., 383.
2. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 5: 370.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 31.
4. Ibid., wisdom 379.
5. Ibn Suʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 223.
6. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, 107.
7. Ibid., 286
8. Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd*, 367-68.

"A person's appointed time of death is his true guardian."[1] Imam ʿAlī (a) consistently urged acceptance of what has been determined in divine decree and predestination. In a letter of condolence to al-Ashʿath b. Qays upon the passing of his son, he said: "Ashʿath, it is fitting that you mourn your son—his relationship to you makes it right that you should mourn. But if you can bear his loss with fortitude, know this: you can find consolation for every loss in God. Ashʿath, if you bear your affliction with fortitude, fate will have assailed you, yes, but you will be rewarded, whereas if you break down in shock, fate will have assailed you anyway, and you will be punished."[2]

Although divine decree and predestination are inevitable, Imam ʿAlī, the Commander of the Faithful (a), also provided guidance on how to improve the fulfillment of God's confirmed decree—one of the most important being supplication. Regarding this, he stated: "Supplication repels inevitable decree, so take it up as a weapon."[3] In a supplication attributed to him, he prayed: "O Lord, keep away from me distress, hardship, affliction, and an unfavorable decree."[4] Additionally, in his counsel to his son (a), he wrote: "place your religious and your worldly affairs in God's care. I beseech him to ordain for you everything good, now and later, both in this world and the hereafter"[5]

Belief in the inevitability of divine decree and predestination should not lead a person to belief in compulsion or determinism, or denial of free will in their actions. Likewise, one must not attribute sin and disobedience to God on the grounds of compulsion. On the other hand, considering the effect of supplication or prayer in altering even the definite divine decree should not lead to the belief in absolute delegation (*tafwīḍ*) of actions to human beings. Regarding this matter, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ʿAlī (a), said: "Do not say that God has abandoned them, for in doing so, you would be belittling Him. And do not say that He has compelled them to disobedience, for that would be an injustice to Him. Rather, say that every good is through divine guidance, and every evil occurs in the absence of His aid, for all things are encompassed by His knowledge."[6] Elsewhere, it is narrated from him: "God is too exalted to will indecency, and too mighty for anything to exist in His dominion except what He wills."[7] And: "Do not attribute your sins and errors to God, for in doing so, you surrender yourselves to

1. Ḥuwayzī, *Tafsīr*, 9: 29.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 291.
3. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 2: 620.
4. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 525.
5. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 31.
6. Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 1: 209.
7. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 20: 268.

Satan."[1] Regarding determinism and free will, he is also reported to have said: "Indeed, it is a matter between the two—neither absolute compulsion [determinism] nor complete delegation [free will]."[2]

Divine Names and Rulings

One of the most critical discussions in the study of divine names and rulings is the issue of faith (*īmān*) and disbelief (*kufr*). The issue arose at the very inception of Islam and the prophetic era. Faith was measured by the following criteria: testifying to the oneness of God and the prophethood of the Messenger of God (s), establishing prayer, paying *zakāt* (a kind of obligatory charity), and performing the Hajj pilgrimage.[3] However, during the imamate of Imam ʿAlī (a), the need for a renewed clarification of faith made itself felt. The emergence of the Kharijites and their interpretation of faith and disbelief turned this issue into a socio-theological challenge. They deemed anyone who committed a major sin to be outside the fold of faith and consequently classified them as disbelievers. As a result, according to the Kharijite doctrines, the boundaries of faith became narrower while the domain of disbelief expanded. This belief also influenced their theological account of imamate, leading them to declare Imam ʿAlī (a) a disbeliever and to consider opposition against him a religious obligation.[4] Given the theological and doctrinal climate of that time regarding the issue of faith and disbelief, Imam ʿAlī undertook a thorough elucidation of these concepts.

Faith

Imam ʿAlī (a) has elaborated on the meaning and nature of faith in his statements. He defines faith as a combination of heartfelt knowledge, verbal affirmation, and action. At times, he conveys prophetic traditions on the subject, narrating from him: "Faith is heartfelt knowledge, verbal affirmation, and adherence to obligations."[5] And: "Faith is a word that is spoken, an action that is performed, and an understanding reached through intellect."[6] On another occasion, when Imam ʿAlī (a) was asked whether merely uttering the two testimonies (*shahādatayn*)—namely, declaration of belief in God's oneness and Muhammad's prophethood—was sufficient for faith, he responded: "Then where are the

1. Ibid., 20: 316.
2. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, 51: 182.
3. Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 2: 318.
4. Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayna l-firaq*, 55; Nājī et al., "Khawārij," 269-70.
5. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 1: 178.
6. Mufīd, *al-Amālī*, 275.

divine obligations?" He then added: "If faith were only verbal, then fasting, prayer, lawful and unlawful matters would not have been prescribed."[1] Additionally, in a debate between the Imam (a) and ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Kawwāʾ, when the latter, alluding to verse 16 of surah of al-Raʿd (13),[2] asked about the one who is seeing by both night and day, Imam ʿAlī (a) replied: "The one who is seeing by night and day is he who has faith in the past messengers of God and their successors, in the divine scriptures and prophets, in God and His Messenger Muḥammad (s), and who affirms my guardianship. Such a person is truly seeing in both his night and day."[3]

In the hadiths transmitted from Imam ʿAlī (a), Islam and faith are regarded as equivalent and synonymous. Regarding this, he states:

> "I shall define the essence of Islam in such a way that no one before me nor after me will explain it differently: Verily, Islam is submission [to divine commands], and submission (*taslīm*) is certainty, and certainty is affirmation and belief [in God and His commands], and affirmation is acknowledgment, and acknowledgment is action, and action is the fulfillment [of divine obligations]. Truly, the believer does not derive his religion from his own opinion and judgment, but rather, he receives it from God and acts accordingly. Indeed, the certainty of the believer is evident in his deeds, just as the denial of the disbeliever is manifest in his actions. By the One in whose hand is my soul, they did not recognize their own status until they took heed of the denial of disbelievers and hypocrites through their corrupt deeds."[4]

From this hadith, it is evident that Islam as described by the Imam (a) closely resembles his definition of faith, indicating their equivalence in his time. However, within Shiite hadith traditions, particularly in the hadiths of Imam al-Bāqir (a) and Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), Islam and faith are distinguished from one another, as they describe Islam as what safeguards a person's life and wealth, whereas faith is considered guidance and what is firmly rooted in the heart. According to this definition, everything within Islam is also found within faith, but faith occupies a higher rank than Islam.[5] As previously mentioned, the differences in the explanations provided by the Infallibles (a) can be interpreted in light of the social and intellectual contexts of their respective eras. The

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 33.
2. "Are the blind one and the seer equal? Are darkness and light equal?"
3. Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 1: 228.
4. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 45-46.
5. See Ibid., 2: 25-27.

distinction between the definitions of Islam and faith in the era of Imam ʿAlī (a) and that of the Imam al-Bāqir (a) and Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) is no exception to this principle.

Some of Imam ʿAlī's hadiths regarding faith are dedicated to elucidating its fundamental pillars. The Imam (a) stated: "Faith has four pillars: reliance on God, entrusting affairs to God, contentment with divine decree, and submission to God's commands."[1] Additionally, he declared at the outset of a detailed hadith: "Indeed, God, Mighty and Majestic, has established faith upon four pillars: patience, certainty, justice, and jihad."[2] If we consider Islam and faith to be synonymous in Imam ʿAlī's words, then we must also regard guardianship (*wilāya*) and imamate as fundamental pillars of Islam. This is because the Imam (a) stated: "The pillars of Islam are three, each of which is ineffectual without the others: prayer, zakat, and guardianship."[3]

Disbelief

In explaining the meaning and foundations of disbelief, only a single hadith narrated from Imam ʿAlī (a) would suffice us:

> "Disbelief is built upon four pillars: transgression (*fisq*), extremism (*ghuluw*), doubt (*shakk*), and ambiguity (*shubha*). Transgression has four branches: harshness (*jafāʾ*), blindness [of heart] (*ʿamā*), heedlessness (*ghafla*), and defiance (*ʿutūw*). Whoever is harsh belittles the truth, despises the jurists, and persists in great sin. Whoever is blind [of heart] forgets remembrance [of God], follows conjecture, openly defies his Creator, and is persistently pursued by Satan, seeking forgiveness without repentance, humility, or mindfulness. Whoever is heedless harms himself, falls into misguidance, perceives their deviation as guidance, is deceived by false hopes, and is overtaken by regret and remorse when the matter is decided, the veil is lifted, and what they never expected becomes manifest. Whoever is defiant regarding God's command falls into doubt, and whoever doubts, God exalts Himself over him, humiliating him by His dominion and diminishing him by His majesty, just as he was deluded by his Generous Lord and neglected His command. Extremism has four branches: overindulgence in opinion (*taʿammuq bi l-raʾy*), disputation (*tanāzuʿ*) over it, deviation (*zaygh*), and discord (*shiqāq*). Whoever overindulges [in opinion] does not return to the truth but only sinks further into confusion, and no trial lifts from him except that another overtakes him, causing his religion to unravel, leading him into a state of utter instability. Whoever disputes excessively becomes known for foolishness

1. Ibid., 2: 47.
2. Ibid., 2: 50.
3. Baqī, *al-Maḥāsin*, 1: 286.

due to his persistent argumentation. Whoever deviates finds good deeds repugnant and evil deeds appealing. Whoever engages in discord finds their paths obscured and their affairs confounded, leaving him with no escape, as he fails to follow the path of the believers. Doubt has four branches: suspicion (*mirya*), capricious desire (*hawā*), hesitation (*taraddud*), and surrender (*istislām*). As God, Mighty and Majestic, says: 'Then which of the bounties of your Lord will you dispute?' (Q 53:55). In another report, the four branches are: suspicion, fear of the truth, hesitation, and surrender to ignorance and its people. Whoever is terrified by what lies ahead retreats in fear. Whoever disputes in religion wavers in doubt, is overtaken by the forerunners among the believers, caught by those who come after, and trampled under the hooves of Satan. Whoever surrenders to the destruction of this world and the Hereafter perishes between them. Whoever is saved from this is only saved by the grace of certainty, and God has created nothing rarer than certainty. Ambiguity has four branches: admiration of adornment (*iʿjāb bi-l-zīna*), self-deception (*taswīl al-nafs*), misinterpretation of deviation (*taʾawwul al-ʿiwaj*), and mixing truth with falsehood (*labs al-ḥaqq bi l-bāṭil*). Adornment diverts from clear proof. Self-deception leads to indulgence in desires. Deviation inclines its possessor toward immense misguidance. Mixing truth with falsehood is layers upon layers of darkness. This is disbelief, along with its pillars and branches.[1]

Prophethood

The accounts and stories of the divine prophets have been extensively reflected in the hadiths from Imam ʿAlī (a). In Shiite hadith sources, numerous hadiths on this subject have been transmitted from the Imam (a).[2] Among these, there are also statements and indications from Imam ʿAlī (a) regarding both general and specific prophethood. The discussion on general prophethood addresses the necessity of the mission of divine prophets, while the discussion on specific prophethood establishes the prophethood of Prophet Muḥammad (s).

In general, fundamental questions regarding prophethood were not raised in the Islamic society of that time, as people had accepted Islam by acknowledging the prophethood of Muḥammad (s), his finality, and the prophethood of other divine prophets. Moreover, numerous prophetic hadiths have stipulated that acceptance of Islam is contingent upon belief in the prophethood and finality of Muḥammad (s), along

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 291-93.

2. See e.g., ʿUṭārudī, *Musnad al-Imām Amīr al-muʾminīn*, 13: 198-233, 249-51.

with the acknowledgment of the prophethood of other divine messengers.[1] Nevertheless, discussions related to prophethood can be observed in some sermons of Imam ʿAlī (a) as well as in certain debates with followers of other religions. The primary topics addressed in this regard pertain to the superiority of Prophet Muḥammad (s) over other divine prophets and his infallibility both before and after his mission. The statements of Imam ʿAlī (a) in this section will be discussed under three themes: the philosophy of prophethood, revelation (*waḥy*), and the prophethood of Muḥammad (s).

Philosophy of Prophethood

Imam ʿAlī, the Commander of the Faithful (a), regarded the philosophy of prophethood and the primary reason for the sending of messengers by Allah as a means to remind humanity of the innate covenant they had with Him—one they had forgotten, leading to their ignorance of His divine right over them:

> "From Adam's descendants, God selected prophets, exacting a pledge from them to convey his revelation, and entrusting them with delivering his message. As time passed, most people altered God's covenant, denied what they owed him, and ascribed partners to him. The devils had driven them away from their earlier recognition of him, stopping them from his worship altogether. God dispatched messengers and a succession of prophets to restore people to their original pledge. He directed his prophets to remind people of the divine favors they had forgotten, establish the truth by conveying his message, and revive their numbed intellects."[2]

In another sermon, he stated: "he sent messengers to jinn and humans to lift her veils, warn of her harm, explain her ciphers, and highlight her faults, to offer lessons in her cycles of illness and health and her bounds of licit and illicit, and to show them what God has prepared for those who obey or disobey."[3]

Imam ʿAlī (a) regarded the sending of prophets as a divine tradition that remains ongoing throughout all eras: "Never in all this time did God allow his creation to be left without a prophet, a revealed scripture, a sure proof, or a clear path. The scanty number who answered did not stop God's messengers, nor the multitudes of their repudiators. Each messenger had his successor named for him, each successor was identified by his predecessor. In this manner, generations went by, and ages passed. Fathers died, and sons took their place."[4] The Imam (a) referred to the purpose of sending divine prophets

1. See e.g., Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1: 397; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 2: 318.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 1.
3. Ibid., sermon 183.
4. Ibid., sermon 1.

in another way and said: "Age after age, even in periods of dormancy, God communicates with certain servants whose minds he speaks to and whose intellects he engages, who kindle bright lamps of vigilance in people's ears, eyes, and hearts. God's gifts are precious! Guides in the wilder- ness, his chosen men remind the nations of his special days, and warn them that their meeting with him is near. They praise those who keep to the middle road and give them tidings of salvation, they censure those who stray to the right and the left and caution them against damnation—in this way, they serve as lamps in times of darkness and guides in periods of doubt."[1]

The divine prophets were sent to serve as proof against the people: "God singled out messengers and sent them bearing his revelation, making them his proof against the people and giving them no cause to say he had stopped providing them with signs"[2] The purpose of sending messengers is not limited to guiding people; rather, they are also the means through which divine blessings are bestowed upon humanity: "Observe the abundance of God's blessings on them. He sent them a messen- ger, secured their obedience through his religion, and gathered their company within his mission. See how bounty spread the wings of her generosity over them and the wellsprings of her delights flowed. See how the new religion gath- ered them within the gifts of its grace. They were immersed in its bounty, joyful in the fresh greenness of its way of life."[3]

Revelation

As previously mentioned, some of the sermons of Imam ʿAlī (a) discuss the subject of revelation. As stated earlier, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ʿAlī (a), identified one of the purposes of the prophets' mission as serving as proof against the people, saying: "God singled out messengers and sent them bearing his revelation, making them his proof against the people."[4] Elsewhere, referring to the covenant that Allah took from the prophets, he said: "exacting a pledge from them to convey his revelation, and entrusting them with delivering his message."[5] The covenant mentioned here refers to the divine commitment imposed upon the prophets to preserve revelation and faithfully deliver Allah's decrees to the people. It appears that through these words, Imam ʿAlī (a) emphasizes the truthfulness and sincerity of all prophets in receiving revelation and conveying divine commands—a concept that aligns with the doctrine of prophetic

1. Ibid., sermon 222.
2. Ibid., sermon 144.
3. Ibid., sermon 192.
4. Ibid., sermon 144.
5. Ibid., sermon 1.

infallibility (*ʿiṣma*). In another sermon, Imam ʿAlī (a) states that the angels are entrusted with divine revelation: "He entrusts them with his revelation and sends them to his messengers bearing his commands and prohibitions. He shields them from doubt and uncertainty, so not one strays from the path of his pleasure."[1] This statement can also be understood as another affirmation of the authenticity and truthfulness of divine revelation to the prophets and messengers.

Muḥammad's Prophethood

Numerous hadiths about Prophet Muḥammad (s) have been transmitted from Imam ʿAlī (a). As previously mentioned, the Islamic society during Imam ʿAlī's era did not feel a significant need for an extensive exposition of the concept of prophethood—whether in its general or specific aspects. Consequently, a comprehensive discussion of all its dimensions is not fully reflected in his sermons and sayings. Moreover, most of Imam ʿAlī's statements about the Prophet (s) focus on history as well as his conduct, attributes, and traditions. Among the most significant themes regarding the Prophet's prophethood that are highlighted in these hadiths are the circumstances in which his prophetic mission began, the purpose of his prophethood, divine selection, his finality, and his infallibility.

The intellectual and social landscape of the Arabian Peninsula at the beginning of the Prophet's mission

Regarding this, Imam ʿAlī (a) described the state of the Arabs of that era as follows: "God sent Muḥammad (s) when no Arab read scripture or claimed prophecy. He shepherded them until he had brought them to a safe encampment, a place of refuge, where their lances were straightened and the ground under them made firm."[2] In another statement, he says:

> "He sent him at a time when there was a gap between messengers, when nations lay in deep slumber, ignorance was widespread, tribulations were rampant, firm covenants were being undone, truth was obscured, injustice prevailed, religion was fading, and wars were raging. It was a time when the gardens of the world had withered, their branches had dried, their leaves had fallen, their fruits had perished, and their waters had sunk into the earth. The signs of guidance had vanished, while the banners of ruin had emerged. The world turned its face against its inhabitants, scowling and retreating instead of advancing. Its fruit was

1. Ibid., sermon 91.
2. Ibid., sermon 33.

> tribulation, its food was carrion, its emblem was fear, and its cloak was the sword [and war]. You were utterly scattered, as blindness had overtaken its people, and its days had cast darkness upon them. They severed family ties, shed each other's blood, and buried their own daughters alive in the dust. A good life and the comforts of the world passed them by. They neither hoped for a reward from Allah nor feared His punishment—by Allah, they did not. Their living were blind and impure, and their dead were doomed to the fire, utterly lost."[1]

In several other statements by Imam ʿAlī (a), it is mentioned: "He [Allah] sent him during a period of cessation and interruption of messengers—when the truth had been abandoned, the Lord was unknown, and resurrection and divine warning were denied";[2] "He sent him during a time of prophetic cessation and [intensifying] divisions among nations—[when] the paths [leading to Allah] were blocked, wisdom had vanished, and the banners of guidance and proofs had been concealed";[3] "He raised him during a time of prophetic cessation, the diminishing of messengers, and the silence of knowledge—[when] nations were in discord, the path of truth was lost, the Lord was unknown, and the Day of Judgment and divine promise were rejected";[4] "At the time when God sent Muḥammd (s) as a prophet, people wandered in confusion and attempted to gather their firewood in the darkness of sedition. Passions had seduced them, arrogance had caused them to slip, gross ignorance had rendered them witless, and they stood confounded in the face of tumultuous affairs and painful folly";[5] "dispatched when people were swamped in confusion, tossed on waves of deviation, led by reins of destruction, hearts clamped in padlocks of grime."[6]

The purpose of the Prophet's mission

In his sermons, Imam ʿAlī (a) pointed to the purpose of Allah in sending Prophet Muḥammad (s) as a messenger. One of these purposes was to rescue the people from the disbelief and misguidance in which they were entrenched during the era of ignorance, as he said: "The land became illuminated with Muḥammad's light after a time of black error, intense ignorance and uncouth ways, a time when people had made the unlawful legal

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 60-61.
2. Ibid., 5: 269.
3. Ibid., 5: 372.
4. Ibid., 8: 174.
5. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 99.
6. Ibid., sermon 191.

and demeaned the wise, when they were living in a state of stupor, and dying as unbelievers."[1]

Another goal, which can be seen as aligned with the previous one, was to guide the people from the worship of idols to the worship of the one true God. In this regard, he said: "God sent Muḥammad (s) to turn his servants from worship of idols to his worship, from obeying Satan to his obedience. He sent him with the truth, with a clear and comprehensive Quran, so his servants may know how to recognize their Lord after their earlier ignorance of him, that they may acknowledge him after prior repudiation, and accept him after previous denial. He, the Most Luminous, unveiled to them in his Book without their ever seeing him, by showing them his power, warning them of his rule, and reminding them that he had destroyed nations with his strong reckoning and reaped lives in harsh punishment."[2] In another sermon, he stated: "he had ignited the flame of truth for those who sought its fire, and illuminated the road for those who stumbled. Through Muḥammad (s), hearts were guided after having been enmeshed in mutiny. He erected clear waymarks and luminous rules."[3]

Calling people to the truth and guiding them is another purpose reflected in the words of Imam ʿAlī (a): "God sent Muḥammad (s) to call toward truth and bear witness to people. He conveyed his Lord's messages, untiring and unstinting. He battled God's enemies, unflagging and unfaltering. He is the leader of the pious and the eyes of the righteous";[4] "God sent a Messenger, a guide, with a book that speaks and an established religion"[5] and "God sent Muḥammad (s) with brilliant light, clear proof, a distinct path, and a book of guidance."[6]

In other passages, fulfilling the divine command, bringing about the fulfillment of Allah's promise, warning the people, and completing the proof against them are mentioned as additional purposes of Allah in sending Prophet Muḥammad (s): "God sent Muḥammad (s) as a warner to all peoples and a trustee of his revelation";[7] "God sent Muḥammad (s) as warner for the world and witness to the truth of the Messengers";[8]

1. Ibid., sermon 151.
2. Ibid., sermon 147.
3. Ibid., sermon 72.
4. Ibid., sermon 116.
5. Ibid., sermon 169.
6. Ibid., sermon 161.
7. Ibid., sermon 26.
8. Ibid., letter 62.

"whom he sent to execute his command, vindicate his claim, and deliver his warning";[1] "he sent to transmit his command and express his remembrance. He discharged the trust with honor";[2] "God sent Muḥammad (s) to fulfill his promise";[3] "God sent Muḥammad (s) as a witness, a herald, and a warner"[4] and "he completed his message to his creatures through our own Prophet Muḥammad (s), and his advocacy and warnings reached their climax."[5]

In a sermon, Imam ʿAlī, the Commander of the Faithful (a), spoke about the circumstances in which the Prophet's mission began, mentioning a set of divine goals and purposes behind the prophethood:

> "I testify that Muḥammad (s) is God's servant and messenger and acknowledge that God sent Muḥammad (s) with a celebrated religion, a legacy of knowledge, a transcribed scripture, brilliant light, gleaming radiance, and clear command. All this, in order to remove doubts, establish proofs, caution with portentous signs, and warn against God's punishments. When Muḥammad (s) arrived, people were embroiled in seditions. Religion's rope was severed, conviction's foundations were shaken, principles were scattered, the community was shattered, the egress had narrowed, and a way out could not be seen. Right guidance was not recognized, and the blindness was total. The Merciful Lord was disobeyed, Satan was abetted, and faith had no support. Its pillars had come crashing down, its features were distorted, its paths had fallen into disrepair, and its trails had worn away. In obedience to Satan, people had followed his ways and alighted at his watering hole. With their support, his banners were raised high, and his pennants were unfurled. This was a time when sedition was ascendant, when people were crushed by its steeds and trampled under its hooves. Enmeshed in its throes, they were in a state of convulsion, lost, confused, and ignorant. They lived in the best of abodes but with the worst of neighbors. They lived in a land where the learned were demeaned and the ignorant esteemed. Here, slumber had turned into insomnia and kohl had been replaced by tears."[6]

Divine selection and choosing

In general, divine prophets, and specifically the Prophet of Islam (s), were chosen for prophethood by Allah's selection. In some passages of his sermons, Imam ʿAlī (a) referred

1. Ibid., sermon 83.
2. Ibid., sermon 100.
3. Ibid., sermon 1.
4. Ibid., sermon 105.
5. Ibid., sermon 91.
6. Ibid., sermon 2.

to this point, saying: "God sent him with light and precedence among his select";[1] "God selected him from the tree of prophets, the lamp-niche of illumination, the forelock of majesty, and the navel of Baṭḥā', from the lamps in the darkness, and the wellsprings of wisdom";[2] "until this divine honor came to Muḥammad (s). God extracted him from the most precious of mines to be quarried, the most venerated of roots from which to grow, from the very same tree from which God brought forth his prophets and chose his trustees";[3] "the one designated to convey his precious message";[4] "I testify that Muḥammad (s) is God's chosen servant and his faithful trustee";[5] "Muḥammad (s) came from the worthiest repository and the noblest roots, from the mine of honor and the cradle of soundness"[6] and "Whenever God divided a blood line into two, he placed Muḥammad (s) in the best line; no fornicator ever had a share in producing him, nor an adulterer any part."[7]

Finality of Prophethood

One of the key elements that completes the pillars of faith is the acceptance and testimony to the finality of the Prophet. That is, Prophet Muḥammad (s) is the Seal of the Prophets, and no other prophet will emerge after him. Emphasis on this point is evident in several passages of Imam ʿAlī's words: "God sent Muḥammad (s) … to follow his messengers and seal his revelation";[8] "God sent Muḥammad (s) to fulfill his promise and complete the line of prophecy"[9] and "Muḥammad (s) was the trustee of God's revelation, the seal of his prophets."[10]

Infallibility

Although the infallibility of the Prophet (s) in receiving and conveying divine revelation and commands is agreed upon by all Muslims, there is disagreement among different Islamic sects regarding whether the scope of the Prophet's infallibility extends beyond this to include all of his actions, both before and after his prophethood. In some of his sermons, Imam ʿAlī (a) refers to the infallibility of the Prophet (s) in receiving and

1. Ibid., sermon 213.
2. Ibid., sermon 108.
3. Ibid., sermon 94.
4. Ibid., sermon 178.
5. Ibid., sermon 185.
6. Ibid., sermon 96.
7. Ibid., sermon 214.
8. Ibid., sermon 133.
9. Ibid., sermon 1.
10. Ibid., sermon 173.

conveying divine revelation. At times, he describes him as the trustworthy guardian of divine revelation: "God sent Muḥammad (s) as a warner to all peoples and a trustee of his revelation";[1] "He is the trustee whom you, God";[2] "Muḥammad (s) was the trustee of God's revelation, the seal of his prophets"[3] and "I testify that Muḥammad (s) is God's chosen servant and his faithful trustee."[4] At other times, the Imam (a) stated that, due to the infallibility of the Prophet (s) in conveying the divine commands, he did not fall short in fulfilling his duty as a prophet: "He conveyed his Lord's messages, untiring and unstinting."[5]

Regarding the infallibility of the Prophet (s) before and after his prophethood, in addition to what has been mentioned about his divine selection, which indicates his infallibility from birth until the end of his life, it can also be noted that Prophet Muhammad (s) was the best of people both in his childhood and adulthood. Imam ʿAlī (a), emphasizing this point, said: "As a child, he was the best of the entire world, as a man, the most noble."[6]

The Imam (a), in response to a Jewish man who inquired about the repentance of Prophet Adam (a) and the superiority of the Prophet (s) over other divine prophets, pointed to the Prophet's infallibility and said: "Regarding Muḥammad (s), something even greater has been revealed, despite the fact that he committed no sin. The Almighty God said 'that Allah may forgive you what is past of your sin and what is to come' (Q 48:2). Indeed, on the Day of Judgment, Muḥammad (s) will be resurrected having neither committed any sin nor facing any punishment for it."[7] The fact that the Prophet (s) will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment without having committed any sin or facing any punishment is a testament to his infallibility. In the same event, when the Jewish man asked about God granting wisdom to John the son of Zechariah (a) at a young age, the Commander of the Faithful (a) responded:

> "Indeed, John the son of Zechariah (a) lived in an era where neither idolatry was prevalent nor was it an age of ignorance. In contrast, Muḥammad (s) was granted wisdom and understanding in his childhood, while among idolaters and the associates of Satan. However, he never developed an inclination towards any idol,

1. Ibid., sermon 26.
2. Ibid., sermon 106.
3. Ibid., sermon 173.
4. Ibid., sermon 185.
5. Ibid., sermon 116.
6. Ibid., sermon 105.
7. Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 1: 211.

> nor did he attend the festive gatherings of the idolaters. No falsehood was ever heard from him; he was consistently truthful, trustworthy, and forbearing … He consistently wept so intensely from the fear of God Almighty that his prayer mat would become drenched with his tears, despite having committed no offense nor any sin."[1]

The Prophet's abstention from participating in idolaters' ceremonies, his aversion to idol worship, and his constant fasting for the sake of God—all of which pertain to the period before his prophethood—indicate his infallibility from childhood and prior to his divine mission.

Imamate

The issue of Imamate is one of the most significant points of contention between Shiite and Sunni Islam. As previously mentioned, Imamate was the first dispute that arose among Muslims following the Prophet's demise.[2] After his passing, while a large number of people, including the Banu Hashim, were engaged in the funeral preparations of the Prophet, a group gathered at Saqīfa and appointed Abū Bakr as his successor. This occurred despite the fact that the Prophet (s), at the event of Ghadīr Khumm, had declared: "Whoever considers me his master (*mawlā*), then ʿAlī is his master." Although Sunni scholars have consistently sought to interpret the word *mawlā* in this hadith in a way that does not imply imamate or succession, Shiite scholars have defended its indication of ʿAlī's rightful position as the Prophet's successor. They have also endeavored to provide numerous historical and textual proofs affirming that the Prophet (s) explicitly designated the Commander of the Faithful (a) as his successor on various occasions. The late ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī (d. 1971) meticulously compiled the transmitters of the Hadith of Ghadīr in his work *al-Ghadīr fī al-Kitāb wa l-Sunna wa l-adab*, demonstrating its status as a mass-transmitted (*mutawātir*) hadith.

Throughout history, Shiite scholars have consistently sought to establish Imam ʿAlī's rightful succession. Some have focused on his virtues and merits, while others have substantiated this claim using Sunni hadith sources. This section aims to present the perspectives on Imamate found in Imam ʿAlī's own statements, as recorded in Shiite sources. These statements will be categorized under the following themes: the necessity of imamate, proof of Imam ʿAlī's imamate, descriptions of Imam ʿAlī (a), and

1. Ibid., 1: 223.
2. See Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn*, 2; Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa l-niḥal*, 1: 31.

characteristics of the Imams (a). Additionally, the concept of Mahdism (*Mahdawiyya*) in Imam ʿAlī's words will also be addressed, as it is closely related to the issue of imamate.

Necessity of Imamate

The necessity of imamate and the presence of a leader and guide for society after the Prophet's demise is a matter that reason can comprehend independently, without reliance on transmitted sources. This is because, like all human beings, the Prophet (s) was destined to spend a limited time in this earthly world and ultimately depart upon the arrival of his appointed time. Therefore, a society that was guided and led in the best possible manner by an infallible figure such as the Prophet (s) would continue to require leadership by an infallible successor. According to numerous historical and hadith reports, this issue was always a matter of concern for the Prophet (s). These reports indicate that from the very beginning of his divine mission in Mecca until his migration to Medina and the establishment of the Islamic government, the Prophet (s) consistently emphasized this matter, appointing the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ʿAlī (a), as his executor and successor. These include the event of *Yawm al-Indhār* (Day of Warning), where he invited his close relatives to Islam[1] and the Pledge of ʿAqaba, which occurred shortly before his migration to Medina.[2]

The Commander of the Faithful, Imam ʿAlī (a), repeatedly emphasized the necessity of leadership in various statements and occasions. In response to advocates of arbitration (*ahl al-taḥkīm*), whose actions led to the emergence of the Kharijites, he declared: "In truth, the community must have a ruler."[3] In another statement, he asserted that the earth can never be devoid of a divine proof (*ḥujja*): "O Lord, indeed, You do not leave Your earth without guiding proofs from You."[4]

In a sermon, Imam ʿAlī (a) further elaborated: "O Lord, indeed, it is necessary that there be proofs [from You] upon Your earth, one succeeding another, to guide Your creation to Your religion and teach them Your knowledge, so that the followers of Your guardians do not become divided. [This guardian is] either manifest, though the people do not obey him, or hidden, while all await his reappearance. Even if, during times of peace, he remains concealed from the people's sight, his universal knowledge is never

1. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 321.
2. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 9: 47.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 40.
4. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 178.

absent from them. His teachings remain firm in the hearts of the faithful, who act upon them with conviction."[1]

Another hadith states: "O Lord, You never leave the earth without a proof who guides to You—whether he be manifest and known or fearful and concealed—so that Your proof and argument may never be invalidated."[2] These statements collectively affirm the necessity of a divine proof on earth, which finds its fulfillment in the existence of the Imam.

Proving His Own Imamate

When Imam ʿAlī, the Commander of the Faithful (a), was confronted with the usurpation of the caliphate, his first course of action was to establish proof of his own imamate. He pursued this goal through multiple approaches—at times by arguing and reasoning with the usurpers, and at other times by affirming the divine nature of imamate and clarifying his divinely appointed guardianship and imamate.

Clarifying ʿAlī's inheritance and succession to the Prophet (s)

The first step in confronting the usurpation of the caliphate was to establish that ʿAlī (a) was the rightful heir and successor of the Prophet (s). This was primarily achieved through the narration of Prophetic hadiths by the Imam ʿAlī (a) himself. In this regard, he narrated from the Messenger of God (s): "[Salmān reported: I asked the Prophet (s),] 'O Messenger of God, every prophet has a successor—who is your successor?' [The Prophet (s)] remained silent and did not answer. Some days later, when he saw me from afar, he called out, 'O Salman!' I responded, 'Yes,' and went to him. The Prophet (s) then asked, 'Do you know who was the successor of Moses?' I replied, 'Yushaʿ ibn Nun (Joshua son of Nun).' The Prophet (s) said, 'Indeed, for he was the best and most knowledgeable among them on that day.' He then continued, 'And I bear witness that today, ʿAlī is the best and most superior among the people. He is my guardian (*walī*), my heir, and my successor (*waṣī*).'"[3] In another hadith, the Prophet (s) addressed ʿAlī (a), saying: "You are the successor of the deceased among my household and my representative over the living of my nation. Opposition to you is opposition to me, and peace with you is peace with me."[4]

According to a report:

1. Ibid., 1: 339.
2. Ṣaffār, *Baṣā'ir*, 1: 468.
3. Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal al-sharā'iʿ*, 2: 469.
4. Khazzāz, *Kifayat al-athar*, 151.

> A man once asked ʿAlī (a), "O Commander of the Faithful, how did you inherit from your cousin while his uncle did not inherit from him?" ʿAlī (a) replied: "O people, open your ears and listen to what I say. The Messenger of God (s) gathered us, the children of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, in the house of one of our own. He brought forth a *mudd*[1] and a half of food along with a cup of drink. We all ate and drank, yet the food and drink remained as they were. Among us was one who could consume an entire lamb's side on his own and drink as much as several large vessels. Then the Messenger of God said, 'Now that you have seen this, which of you will pledge allegiance to be my brother, my heir, and my successor?' Though I was the youngest among those present, I stood up and said, 'I will.' He told me to sit down. He repeated his question three times, and each time I rose, and each time he told me to sit. The third time, he placed his hand upon mine and thus, I inherited from him while my uncle did not."[2]

Imam ʿAlī's arguments for his rightful claim to caliphate

The second step Imam ʿAlī (a) took in proving his rightful claim to imamate and caliphate was to remind the people of his superiority over the other companions of the Messenger of God (s) in the matter of caliphate. Regarding the usurpation of his right at Saqīfa, he eloquently expressed his grievance in the famous sermon known as al-Shiqshiqiyya:

> "By God, that man [i.e. Abū Bakr] donned its cloak knowing that I am the pivot to its grinding stone—its stream flows from my summit and no soaring bird can reach my heights. I draped a curtain across it and turned my face away. I weighed two options: strike with an amputated hand or endure a blind darkness … I saw that forbearance was the judicious choice. So I endured—but my eyes filled with dust and my throat choked as I saw my inheritance looted. Thus it was, until the first went on his way, tossing it to another [i.e. ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb] after him … How strange that he should wish to give it up during his lifetime yet secure it for another after his death! … Thus it was, until, when he went on his way, he handed it over to a group of people he supposed I belonged with. Dear God, what a Council! Was there doubt regarding my stature, even in comparison with the first of them, that I was now being equated with these laggards!"[3]

In one of his sermons, Imam ʿAlī (a) recounted what transpired in the council for appointing the caliph, which had been established by ʿUmar. He said: "Someone said to me, 'How you covet the caliphate, son of Abū Ṭālib!' I retorted, 'No, by God, you are more

1. One *mudd* is approximately 750 grams.
2. Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal al-sharāʾiʿ*, 1: 170.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 3; see also Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 287-89.

covetous and farther away from it, while I am closer and more worthy! What I seek is my right, and you are blocking me from it, you are hitting me in the face and pushing me away!' When I struck him with this clear argument in front of the whole group, he was dumbstruck and could find no answer."[1] In another sermon, he said in this regard: "You know full well that I have more right to the caliphate than anyone else. I will concede—but, by God, I will continue to do so only for as long as the concerns of the Muslims remain unharmed, as long as the injustice is directed solely at me. I do so in the hope of God's reward and recompense and in distaste for the adornments and splendors for which you vie."[2]

In another sermon, during the uprising of the People of Camel (*al-Jamal*) against him, the Commander of the Faithful (a) declared:

> "When God, the Blessed and Exalted, took the soul of His Prophet (s), we said: 'We are his household (*Ahl al-Bayt*), his supporters, his heirs, his closest kin, and the most deserving of God's creation to his legacy. It is not fitting that anyone should dispute with us over his rightful authority and governance.' Yet, while we stood firm upon this truth, a group of hypocrites rose up, seized the Prophet's rule from us, and placed it in the hands of others. By God, our eyes wept and our hearts grieved over this. By God, all hearts turned harsh against us. I swear by God, had it not been for the fear of division among the Muslims, their relapse into disbelief, and the harm it would bring to religion, we would have done everything in our power to change that."[3]

At various times and in different circumstances, Imam ʿAlī (a) consistently reminded others—especially the companions of the Prophet (s)—of his virtues and merits in order to establish his superiority. A significant instance of this was his *munāshada* and argument with the members of the council (*shūrā*), an event that became known as *Ḥadīth al-Munāshada*. During the council meeting, Imam ʿAlī (a) addressed those present, enumerating his virtues and seeking their acknowledgment of the truth of his statements.[4]

The Divine nature of the imamate

The third step Imam ʿAlī (a) took in asserting his rightful caliphate and refuting the selection at Saqīfa was to emphasize that the imamate was a divinely ordained

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 172.
2. Ibid., sermon 74.
3. Mufīd, *al-Amālī*, 154-55.
4. See Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 333.

institution. To achieve this, he narrated and recalled the sayings of the Prophet (s) concerning this matter. He quoted the Prophet (s) as having said to him: "O ʿAlī, indeed, God, Mighty and Exalted, looked upon the people of the world and chose me from among all men. Then He looked again and selected you from among all men. A third time, He looked upon the people and chose the Imams from your offspring, making them the leaders of the world. And in the fourth instance, He chose Fāṭima, granting her superiority over all women of the world."[1]

In another hadith, the Prophet (s) said: "O ʿAlī, indeed, God has commanded me to take you as my brother and successor. Thus, you are my brother, my successor, and my representative among my household in my lifetime and after my passing. Whoever follows you has followed me, whoever disobeys you has disobeyed me, whoever rejects you has rejected me, and whoever oppresses you has oppressed me."[2]

Establishing his imamate and guardianship

This stage marked the final step Imam ʿAlī (a) took in proving his rightful imamate and caliphate. At times, this was achieved through his own narration of the Ḥadīth of Ghadīr, in which the Prophet (s) declared: "Whomever I am his *mawlā* (master or guardian), then ʿAlī is his *mawlā*. O God, be a guardian to whoever accepts his guardianship, and be an enemy to whoever opposes him. Support those who support him, and abandon those who abandon him. Humiliate his enemies. Be a protector and benefactor to him and his descendants. Bless them in what You grant them. Strengthen them with the Holy Spirit. Safeguard them wherever they may go upon the earth. Establish the imamate among them. Grant goodness to whoever follows them and destroy those who disobey them, for You are ever near and responsive."[3]

Imam ʿAlī (a) narrated other hadiths affirming his imamate and guardianship, which he attributed to the Prophet (s), who is reported to have said: "Whoever desires to live as I have lived, to die as I have died, and to enter the Paradise that my Lord has promised me … let him accept the guardianship of ʿAlī and the successors (*awṣiyāʾ*) from my descendants."[4]

The Imam (a) also referred to a hadith from the Prophet (s), mentioning the covenant that God had taken from humanity in the world of *dharr* regarding the guardianship of ʿAlī (a). He said: "[O ʿAlī,] you are the one whom God invoked at the beginning of

1. Ṣadūq, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, 4: 374.
2. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 1: 206-7.
3. Ṣadūq, *ʿUyūnu akhbār al-Riḍā* (*a*), 2: 59.
4. Ṣaffār, *Baṣāʾir*, 1: 50.

creation, when He had placed people in the form of shadows, and He asked them: 'Am I not your Lord?' They said: 'Yes.' He then asked: 'Is Muhammad My Messenger?' They replied: 'Yes.' He asked: 'Is ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib My successor?' Most of the creation, except for a few, refused to acknowledge this out of arrogance and rebellion. [Those who acknowledged it] are the true believers and the companions of the right hand."[1] In another account, Imam ʿAlī (a), addressing someone who claimed to love him, said: "Woe to you! Indeed, God created souls two- thousand years before He created bodies, and then He introduced His lovers to us. By God, I did not find your soul among those who were introduced to us."[2]

His characterizations of himself

In order for the people to recognize the virtue and rightful status of Imam ʿAlī (a), he needed to introduce himself to them and recount his qualities and attributes, including his knowledge, wisdom, and position. In one of his speeches, he presented himself as the cause of the people's guidance and said: "Through us you received guidance in the dark night, mounted the camel's lofty hump, and emerged from a moonless night into the light of dawn."[3]

In Imam ʿAlī's statements, many of the attributes and characteristics of the Imam, as described by himself, can be found. He introduced himself as knowledgeable of all divine scriptures, stating: "By God, neither the Jews, nor the Christians, nor the Muslims, nor the followers of David will ask me a question without my informing each of them of the ruling found in their respective divine scripture."[4] In another hadith, he is reported to have said: "Indeed, I am more knowledgeable of the Torah than the Jews and more knowledgeable of the Gospel than the Christians."[5] Emphasizing this very point, the Commander of the Faithful (a) further declared: "If I were to assume the seat of judgment, I would rule among the Muslims according to the Quran … among the Jews according to the Torah … among the Christians according to the Gospel … [and] among the followers of the Psalms according to the Psalms."[6] This narration has been transmitted in varying wording.[7]

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1. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 233.
2. Ṣaffār, *Baṣā'ir*, 1: 87-89.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 4.
4. Ṣaffār, *Baṣā'ir*, 1: 134.
5. Ibid., 1: 134-35.
6. Ibid., 1: 132.
7. To learn about various versions of this hadith, see Ibid., 1: 132-34; ʿAyyāshī, *al-Tafsīr*, 1: 15; Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 341; Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd*, 305; Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 335; Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 532.

Another attribute of Imam ʿAlī (a) by which the Imam (a) has been described is his knowledge of deaths and tribulations (*ʿilm al-manāyā wa l-balāyā*). At times, he regarded this knowledge as a characteristic of the Prophet's Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*), stating: "We are the household to whom the knowledge of deaths, tribulations, and genealogies has been imparted. By God, if one of us were to stand upon a bridge and all the people of the world were presented before him, he would inform them of their names and lineages."[1] On another occasion, he regarded this knowledge as one of his own distinct attributes, declaring: "I have been endowed with qualities that no one before me has been granted: the knowledge of deaths, tribulations, genealogies, and decisive judgment (*faṣl al-khiṭāb*). Thus, there is nothing from the past of which I am ignorant, nor any event in the future of which I am unaware. By God's permission, I give glad tidings and act accordingly. All of this is a divine favor through which God has granted me a share of His knowledge."[2] Regarding the knowledge he acquired from the Prophet (s), the Imam (a) stated: "Indeed, the Messenger of God (s) taught me ten gates of knowledge concerning the lawful and the unlawful, as well as everything that has occurred in the past and all that will transpire until the Day of Resurrection. From each gate, a thousand more were opened for me, until I came to possess knowledge of deaths, tribulations, genealogies, and decisive judgment."[3]

Among the hadiths that indicate Imam ʿAlī's knowledge is the report in which the Prophet (s) addressed Imam ʿAlī (a), saying: "O ʿAlī, I am the city of wisdom, and you are its gate. None may enter the city except through its gate."[4] This hadith has been transmitted in varying wording.[5] In another hadith, the Imam (a) described the Ahl al-Bayt as the refuge of knowledge and the gates of wisdom, stating: "Indeed, God sent Muḥammad (s) as a prophet … Within us, the Ahl al-Bayt, lies the refuge of knowledge, the gates of wisdom, and its illumination."[6]

An Account of the Attributes of the Prophet's Household and the Imams (a)

In the words and sermons of Imam ʿAlī, the Commander of the Faithful (a), a collection of attributes and characteristics of the Prophet's Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*) is reflected. Another theme found in his statements is his exposition of the infallibility and distinctive

1. Ṣaffār, *Baṣā'ir*, 1: 268.
2. Ibid., 1: 200-1.
3. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 2: 643, 646.
4. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 269.
5. See e.g., Ibid., 126, 388, 526; Mufīd, *al-Amālī*, 431, 483.
6. Ṣaffār, *Baṣā'ir*, 1: 364.

qualities of the Imams (a). This highlights the status of imamate within the Imam's teachings. Through public sermons, the Imam (a) dedicated himself to elucidating the status of the Ahl al-Bayt in general and to detailing the attributes of the Imams (a) in particular.

The Attributes of the Ahl al-Bayt (a)

Imam ʿAlī (a) described the Household of the Prophet (s) as the noblest of families, stating: "Muḥammad's line is the best line, his family is the best family, his tree is the best tree. Rooted in the sacred enclave, it rises high in its fertile soil, with tall branches and matchless fruits."[1] In another sermon, he described them as the repository of the Prophet's secrets, stating: "They are the embodiments of God's mystery, the foundations of his creed, the vessels of his knowledge, the harbors for his wisdom, the havens for his scriptures, and the peaks of his religion. Through them, he straightens religion's back when it becomes crooked, and calms its limbs when it trembles."[2]

In various passages of his sermons, the Imam (a), emphasizing the scholarly authority of the Ahl al-Bayt, described them as the foundation of the divine religion, the rightful leaders, and the repositories of knowledge. In one sermon, elucidating that guardianship (*wilāya*) is among the indisputable rights of the Prophet's Household, he stated: "They are the embodiments of God's mystery, the foundations of his creed, the vessels of his knowledge, the harbors for his wisdom, the havens for his scriptures, and the peaks of his religion. Through them, he straightens religion's back when it becomes crooked, and calms its limbs when it trembles."[3] In other passages of Imam ʿAlī's sermons, it is stated: "who are guide ropes of right and tongues of truth";[4] "We are the tree of prophecy, the station of God's message, and the place where angels alight. We are mines of knowledge and springs of wisdom";[5] "We—the people of his Prophet's house—possess the keys to wisdom and the light of command";[6] "They are the nest of knowledge and the death of ignorance. Their judgments testify to their knowledge, their silence speaks of their reason, and their outer reveals their inner. They do not oppose religion, nor do they create division within it, for religion stands among them as a truthful witness—silent yet eloquent. They are the ones most worthy of bearing witness to the truth and conveying

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 94.
2. Ibid., sermon 2.
3. Ibid., sermon 2.
4. Ibid., sermon 87.
5. Ibid., sermon 109.
6. Ibid., sermon 120.

it without deviation or discord. Their past is honorable and evident before God, and His just decree concerning them has already been issued. In this lies a lesson for those who seek admonition";[1] and "They are the pillars of Islam and the doors to the halls of protection. It is through them that right has returned to its home, wrong has been displaced from its residence, and its tongue has been excised at the root. They have assimilated religion with understanding and mindful attention, not by rote learning and narration. There are many narrators of hadith, but those who tend to it mindfully are rare."[2]

In another sermon, the Imam (a) emphasized the continual flow of the Ahl al-Bayt's divine knowledge, stating that with the passing of each one of them, another will rise in their place: "Muḥammad's descendants are like stars in the firmament: if one sets, another rises. The time is near and has almost arrived—the time when God's blessings will reach perfection, and when he will show you what you hope to see."[3]

The Infallibility of the Imams (a)

Imam ʿAlī, the Commander of the Faithful (a), is reported to have said regarding infallibility (*ʿiṣma*): "Indeed, God has purified us and safeguarded us [from sin]. He has made us witnesses over His creation and His proof (*ḥujja*) upon His earth. He has joined us with the Quran and the Quran with us; neither shall we part from it, nor shall it part from us."[4] In another hadith, the Imam (a) seemingly reasoned in favor of the Imams' infallibility, stating: "A created being must not love the disobedience of God, for obedience cannot be found in defying Him, and one who rejects God's command has no true obedience. Obedience is due solely to God, His Messenger (s), and those vested with authority (*ūlī al-amr*). God commanded obedience to His Messenger (s) because he is infallible and pure and will never command disobedience to God. Likewise, God has commanded obedience to those vested with authority because they, too, are safeguarded from sin, pure, and will never command disobedience to God."[5] Regarding the interpretation of *ūlī al-amr*, the Imam (a) is reported to have "said to Ibn ʿAbbās: 'Indeed, the decree for each year is sent down on the Night of Qadr for that very year, and for that decree, there are guardians after the Messenger of God (s).' Ibn ʿAbbās asked, 'Who are

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 391; see also Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 239.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 239.
3. Ibid., sermon 100.
4. Ṣaffār, *Baṣā'ir*, 1: 83.
5. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 1: 139.

they?' The Imam replied, 'I and eleven of my descendants—Imams who are spoken to [by God].'"[1]

Characteristics of the Imams (a)

In Shiite hadith sources, numerous statements from Imam ʿAlī (a) describe the attributes and qualities of the Imams (a). The Imam (a) narrated from the Prophet (s), who said: "The stars are a source of security for the inhabitants of the heavens; if the stars disappear, the heavenly beings will perish. My Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*) [likewise] are a source of security for the inhabitants of the earth; when my Ahl al-Bayt perish, the people of the earth will perish."[2]

Among these attributes is that the Imams (a) are all endowed with divine inspiration. Sulaym b. Qays al-Shāmī narrated from Imam ʿAlī (a): "'Alī (a) said: 'My successors from among my descendants are rightly guided Imams, all of whom receive divine inspiration.' I asked, 'O Commander of the Faithful, who are they?' He replied, 'al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and after them, my son ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn—Sulaym said: "At that time, ʿAlī [b. al-Ḥusayn] was an infant still being nursed"—and after him, eight others, one following the other'."[3]

Another characteristic of the Imams (a) is that through them, God has completed the conveyance of religion and established His proof over His creation. A hadith states: ʿAlī (a) said to the Messenger of God (s), "O Messenger of God, are the guides from among us or from others?" He replied, "The guides will be from us until the Day of Resurrection. Through us, God—Mighty and Exalted—rescued the people from the misguidance of polytheism (*shirk*), and through us, He will deliver them from the darkness of tribulation. Through us, the people will become brothers after the darkness of discord, just as they became brothers after the misguidance of polytheism. God will conclude His command through us, just as He began it through us."[4] It is also narrated that the Prophet (s) said to ʿAlī (a), "O ʿAlī, God will conclude religion through us, just as He began it through us. Through us, He will unite hearts in harmony after enmity and aversion."[5]

Some other hadiths transmitted from Imam ʿAlī (a) indicate that the earth and everything within it belong to the Imam (a). In one such hadith, Imam al-Bāqir (a) said: "We found in the Book of ʿAlī (a) [after the verse]: 'The earth indeed belongs to Allah, and

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 532-33.
2. Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-dīn*, 1: 205.
3. Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, 329.
4. Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-dīn*, 230-31.
5. Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, 21.

He gives its inheritance to whomever He wishes of His servants, and the outcome will be in favour of the Godwary' (Q 7:128)—[it was written] I and my Household are those to whom God has granted the earth. We are the God-wary, and the earth belongs to us."[1]

Mahdism

From a broad perspective, Imam ʿAlī's statements about the end times (*ākhir al-zamān*) can be divided into two main categories: those that depict the conditions of the end times and those that speak about the Mahdī and Mahdism. Here, considering that the events of the end times occur before the appearance of the Mahdī, we will suffice with presenting a sample of these hadiths. In a sermon, the Imam (a) described the end times, saying: "A time will come when only humble believers are safe, not recognized if present and not missed when absent ... People! A time will come upon you when Islam is overturned, just as a vessel is overturned, with its water poured away."[2]

Imam ʿAlī's hadiths as in Shiite sources contain extensive information and reports about Mahdism (*Mahdawiyya*). The hadiths transmitted from the Prophet (s) by Imam ʿAlī (a) announce the existence of the Mahdī, affirm the certainty of Mahdism, and discuss his occultation (*ghayba*) and the bewilderment resulting from it.[3] In this section, we will present only a sample of these hadiths, which outline the general aspects of Mahdism.

Numerous hadiths have been transmitted by Imam ʿAlī (a) from the Prophet (s), including the following: "[The Messenger of God said:] The Day of Resurrection will not arrive until an upriser (*Qā'im*) rises to claim our right, at a time when God—Mighty and Exalted—grants permission. Whoever follows him will be saved, and whoever disobeys him will perish. Fear God, O servants of God, and turn toward him, even if you must walk upon ice, for he is God's caliph, His vicegerent, and my successor";[4] "The world will not come to an end until a man from the descendants of al-Ḥusayn rises and fills it with justice and equity, just as it had been filled with oppression and tyranny";[5] "The Mahdī is from us, the Ahl al-Bayt. God will reform [and arrange] his affair in a single night";[6] "By the One who sent me as a bearer of truth, the upriser from among my descendants will go into an appointed occultation, so long that most people will say, 'God has no need for

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 407-8.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 103.
3. For a detailed account of these hadiths, see ʿUṭārudī, *Musnad al-Imām Amīr al-mi'minī'n*, 14: 385-442.
4. Ṣadūq, *ʿUyūnu akhbār al-Riḍā* (*a*), 2: 59-60.
5. Ibid., 2: 66.
6. Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-dīn*, 1: 152.

the Household of Muḥammad,' and others will doubt his very birth. Whoever lives to see that time must hold firmly to his religion and block the path of Satan's doubts, lest he be led away from my faith and creed. Satan previously drove your forefather and mother out of Paradise, and God has made devils the allies of the faithless";[1] and "The Mahdī is from my descendants. He will undergo an occultation and a bewilderment in which nations will go astray. He will bring forth what remains of the teachings of the divine prophets and will fill the earth with justice and equity, just as it had been filled with oppression and tyranny."[2] Imam ʿAlī (a) narrated from the Prophet (s) regarding the anticipation of relief or final victory (*faraj*): "The best of acts of worship is waiting for relief."[3]

Imam ʿAlī (a) spoke on multiple occasions about Mahdism and the uprising of Imam al-Mahdī (a). At times, he conveyed this message specifically to his Household. He once said to Imam al-Ḥusayn (a): "O Ḥusayn, the ninth from your descendants will be the one who rises for truth, who will make religion triumphant and spread justice and equity." Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) asked, "O Commander of the Faithful, will this truly come to pass?" He replied, "By the One who sent Muḥammad (s) as a prophet and granted him superiority over all creation, yes. But this will happen only after an occultation and bewilderment, during which none will remain steadfast in their faith except the most sincere and those firmly grounded in certainty—those whom God—Mighty and Exalted—has taken a covenant from regarding our guardianship, inscribed faith upon their hearts, and strengthened with His spirit."[4]

On another occasion, Imam ʿAlī (a), the Commander of the Faithful, recounted this matter to his companions. Al-Aṣbagh b. Nubāta narrated: "One day, I came to the Commander of the Faithful (a) and found him immersed in thought, while [with his fingertips] he tapped the ground. I said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, why do I find you deep in thought while striking the ground? Do you have an inclination toward it?' He replied, 'By God, no—never have I had any inclination toward it or toward the world. I am contemplating a child from my eleventh descendant; he is the Mahdī, who will fill the earth with justice and equity just as it has been filled with oppression and tyranny. He will have an occultation and bewilderment, during which some will go astray while others will be guided'."[5]

1. Ibid., 1: 51.
2. Ibid., 1: 287.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 1: 304.
5. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 338.

On various occasions and in his public sermons, the Imam (a) informed the people about the Mahdī and his mission, saying: "A man from my descendants will rise in the end times [with the following features]: he will be fair-skinned with a reddish hue, broad-chested, strong-thighed, and with firm and steadfast shoulders. On his back, he will bear two marks: one matching the color of his skin and another like the mark that the Messenger of God (s) had on his waist. He has two names: one hidden and one manifest. His hidden name is Aḥmad, and his manifest name is Muḥammad. When he raises his banner, the east and west of the world will be illuminated by its light. He will place his hand upon the heads of the servants, and no believer will remain except that his heart will become as firm as steel [out of courage]. God, Mighty and Majestic, will grant him the strength of forty men."[1] In another hadith, Imam ʿAlī (a) described the Mahdī as the avenger of the blood of the Prophet's Household, saying: "By God, I and my two sons will surely be slain, and without doubt, God will raise a man from my descendants in the End Times who will seek retribution for our blood. He will remain hidden from the people until the misguided are distinguished, and the ignorant will say that God has no need for the Household of Muḥammad (s)."[2]

In addition to what has been cited above, Imam ʿAlī's heritage contains hadiths that directly refer to the occultation of the Mahdī (a). Among them is the following: "Our Qāʾim (upriser) will have a prolonged occultation. It is as if I see the Shia wandering like sheep in search of pasture but unable to find it. Behold, whoever among them remains steadfast in his faith and does not become hard-hearted due to the length of his Imam's occultation will be in my rank on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed, when our Qāʾim rises, no allegiance will rest upon his neck. For this reason, his birth will be concealed, and he himself will remain hidden."[3] Regarding the bewilderment that the Shia will experience during the occultation of their Imam (a), the Imam (a) said: "O Shia, it is as if I see you like camels searching for pasture but unable to find it."[4]

Resurrection

Among the sermons of Imam ʿAlī, the Commander of the Faithful (a), there is a reminder that one must always remember death and prepare oneself for the day of one's demise. In one of his sermons, the Imam (a) said: "Imagine that death's talons have pierced you

1. Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-dīn*, 2: 653.
2. Nuʿmānī, *al-Ghayba*, 141.
3. Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-dīn*, 1: 303.
4. Nuʿmānī, *al-Ghayba*, 192.

and hope's threads are severed, that calamitous events have crushed you"[1] Imam ʿAlī (a), in his words, would at times warn the people about death and encourage them to prepare for it: "brace for death, for it hovers overhead. Be those who wake when shaken, who, knowing that the world is not their home, seek a better abode."[2] In another statement, emphasizing that the purpose of this world is the Day of Resurrection and the Hereafter, he said: "Hasten to prepare for the engulfing pangs of death, make ready before it arrives. Know that the resurrection is the final end—enough counsel for the perceptive, enough lesson for the ignorant!"[3]

ʿAlī (a), speaking about the intermediate realm (*ʿālam al-barzakh*) and the questioning in the grave, said: "Finally, when those who had come to bury him had turned back and the grieving mourners had gone away, he was made to sit up alone in his tomb to face a frightening interrogation and a terrible ordeal. People, know that the afterworld's greatest torment is the Pit-of-Boiling-Liquid, the Blaze-of-Hellfire, the Conflagration-of-the Inferno."[4]

Among the sermons of Imam ʿAlī, the Commander of the Faithful (a), there are numerous references to the stages of the Resurrection. Regarding the Blowing of the Trumpet, he said: "and the horn is blown. At that time, spirits will perish, and tongues will be struck dumb."[5] In a detailed passage concerning the Resurrection and the rising of humanity on the Day of Resurrection, it is stated:

> "Then, when affairs conclude, eons run their course, and the resurrection draws near, God plucks people from the recesses of graves, from the nests of birds and the dens of beasts, and from every pit death has cast them into, and they hasten to answer his command. They rush to him in silent troops, standing upright in straight rows, the eye pierces them and the caller forces them to heed his call, clad in garments of submission, suckling the unholy milk of humiliation and shame. Ruses have vanished, hope is lost, hearts are gripped by terror, voices are hushed and mute, throats choke on sweat like a camel-chokes on its bridle-straps, dread pervades, and ears are deafened by the thunderous call to judgment, to the payment for past deeds, be it punishment or reward. All are God's servants, created by his power and ruled by his might. They will be seized by death, thrown into graves, transformed into dry bones, and resurrected alone, they will be held

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 85.
2. Ibid., sermon 64.
3. Ibid., sermon 190.
4. Ibid., sermon 83.
5. Ibid., sermon 196.

> accountable for their deeds and singled out for the reckoning. They were given time to seek a way out and were guided to the beaten path, they had a lifetime to take warning and were led out from the shadows of doubt, they were left free to train for the race and contemplate their purpose, to seek a lighted torch and the promised goal. All this they could have done in their allotted time, in the respite granted for action."[1]

In another passage, the Imam (a), referring to the *Ṣirāṭ* (a bridge in the hereafter) and the passage over it on the Day of Resurrection, said:

> "But know this: You too must cross the bridge of death, with its slippery surface, horrifying stumbles, and repeated terrors. So be conscious of God in the manner of a sage whose heart is deep in thought and whose body is emaciated by fear; whose snatches of sleep in the watches of night are interrupted by prayer, and whose hope for reward makes him choose thirst in the scorching hours of the day; whose passions renunciation dampens, whose tongue remembrance spurs on, and who fears God as he should, in order to obtain God's shelter; who shuns deviation from the straight path, and traverses the middle road to reach his goal; whom delusion's snares do not entangle and dubious affairs do not blind. Such a man wins promised delights and blessed repose, a tranquil sleep, and a day of safety. He has crossed the bridge exemplarily, and arriving at the provisions he had sent on, he exults. Because he feared, he hastened; when given a chance, he labored; seeking, he hoped; fleeing, he dodged; in his present, he was mindful of the morrow; with courage, he looked ahead. O people, take heed: paradise suffices as reward and recompense, hellfire as punishment and penalty. God suffices as avenger and bestower of victory, his Book as interlocutor and adversary."[2]

Although the reckoning of creatures on the Day of Resurrection has been discussed in previous passages, in another statement, the Imam said regarding this matter: "On that day, God will assemble all who went before and all who came after, standing, necks bowed, to be interrogated for the judgment and receive payback for their deeds. Sweat will streak their cheeks like straps of a bridle, and the ground beneath them will tremble. The best any man can hope for is space for his feet and room for his frame."[3]

1. Ibid., sermon 83.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., sermon 102.

Conclusion

Although a thorough examination and contemplation of ʿAlī's statements require a broader scope than this brief discussion allows, a review of the statements attributed to the Commander of the Faithful (a) in various sources reveals his essential elucidatory role in conveying divine teachings. Our aim here has been to explore how ʿAlī (a), in light of the theological and political issues of his time, articulated divine knowledge for his contemporaneous society.

A review of the reported statements of Imam ʿAlī (a) concerning theological teachings reveals that he played a foundational role in certain matters, introducing some issues to the Islamic community for the first time. Regarding theological questions with which the Islamic society of his era was already familiar, the Imam (a) emphasized the correct account of Islamic beliefs by transmitting Prophetic traditions and reaffirming fundamental theological and doctrinal principles of Islam. In other cases, he undertook the task of rectifying distortions that had emerged in the theological thought of the community.

Recounting history and narrating the events that transpired between Saqīfa and the rule of Imam ʿAlī (a) served to correct the community's distorted understanding of imamate, caliphate, and the question of the Prophet's succession. By describing the attributes and characteristics of the Imams (a), he provided Muslims with a strategic framework for recognizing the rank and identity of the Imam (a). In matters of God and monotheism, one can also discern the foundational and formative nature of ʿAlī's statements. Although the community continued to affirm the principle of monotheism, as Muslim scholars have acknowledged, ʿAlī's statements played a central role in shaping the monotheistic accounts of later theologians.

The variation in detail and method of articulating different theological issues can offer us a new perspective and a distinct view of the theological thought of the early Islamic community. Examining how theological matters were presented allows us to understand how that society perceived and engaged with these issues—what concerns occupied its thought and how it approached them. This is one of the key benefits of studying the theological reports attributed to the Imams (a), particularly those of Imam ʿAlī (a).

History of Imam ʿAlī's Shrine

Introduction

After Imam ʿAlī's martyrdom in 40/661, his body was buried in Najaf. In accordance with his will, and due to the hostility of the Banū Umayya (Umayyads) and al-Khawārij (Kharijites), his burial place was kept secret for a time. It was not until the Imamate of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), when the Umayyad government collapsed and the Abbasid government rose to power, that the location of the first Shiite Imam's burial was revealed to the public. The city of Najaf then flourished as the burial place of Imam ʿAlī (a), becoming a pilgrimage destination for his followers and devotees. The Imam ʿAlī's Holy Shrine underwent various developments and expansions under different governments. This article explores the historical reports concerning Imam ʿAlī's burial site and the story of how it was eventually made known to the public, with the aim of illustrating the condition of this sacred site throughout different periods.

Martyrdom and Burial Place of Imam ʿAlī (a)

Imam ʿAlī (a) was martyred as a result of a sword strike by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muljam al-Murādī on the night of the 21st of Ramadan, 40/January 21, 661, at the age of 63. Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022) writes,

> "The demise of the Commander of the Faithful occurred shortly before dawn on the eve of Friday, the 21st of Ramadan in the year 40, as a result of a sword strike. Ibn Muljam al-Murādī martyred him in the Mosque of Kufa ... At his own command, his sons, Imam al-Ḥasan and Imam al-Ḥusayn, took charge of the ritual

> ablution of his body and his shrouding. They transported [the pure body of Imam ʿAlī (a)] to the outskirts of Kufa, where they buried him and concealed the location of his grave. This was done in accordance with the will of the Commander of the Faithful, who foresaw that the Banū Umayya would rise to power after him, and, being hostile toward him, might desecrate his grave out of spite."[1]

Numerous hadiths have been transmitted from Ahl al-Bayt (a) (the Prophet's Household) affirming that Imam ʿAlī (a) was buried in Najaf. According to a hadith from Imam al-Bāqir (a), the Commander of the Faithful (a) instructed in his will, "Transport [my body] to [a region] behind [Kufa]. Wherever your feet fall and a breeze begins to blow in front of you, bury me there."[2] An old name for the city of Najaf was Ẓahr al-Kūfa (behind Kufa).[3]

In the book *Farḥat al-Gharī fī taʿyīn qabr Amīr al-Muʾminīn* (*a*) *ʿAlī* (*a*) *ibn Abī Ṭālib ʿalayh al-salām fī al-Najaf* (The Joy of Gharī in Specifying the Grave of the Commander of the Faithful ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Peace Be Upon Him, in Najaf), ʿAbd al-Karīm b. al-Ṭāwūs (d. 693/1266) quotes a servant of Imam ʿAlī (a) as saying:

> "When the death of the Commander of the Faithful (a) was near, he instructed [Imam] al-Ḥasan and [Imam] al-Ḥusayn (a), saying, 'When I die, place me on a bed and then carry me out. Only hold the back of the bed, as the front will rise by itself. Then take me to al-Ghariyyayn.[4] There, you will see a white stone. Dig beneath that stone, and you will find a log of teak. Bury me there.' When [Imam ʿAlī (a)] passed away, we placed him on a litter, holding only its back. [During the journey] we heard a gentle voice until we arrived at al-Ghariyyayn. There, we found a white stone, from which light seemed to emanate. We dug beneath the stone and found a log of wood inscribed with the words, 'This is [the place] where Noah reserved for ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a).' We then buried him there, filled with joy at how God had honored the Commander of the Faithful (a), and left the place."[5]

According to some hadiths, the land of Najaf, where many Prophets and divine saints are buried, is highly honored. Prophets such as Adam, Hud, Noah, and Salih are said to be buried there. Al-Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar al-Juʿfī is quoted as saying, "I visited Abū ʿAbd Allāh [i.e., Imam al-Ṣādiq (a)] and told him, 'I am eager to visit al-Gharī.' He asked, 'Why?'

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1. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 9-10.
2. Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, 6: 34.
3. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, 565; Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 4: 198, 5: 16.
4. Al-Ghariyyayn is an area located east of Kufa, originally constructed by al-Mundhir b. Imriʾ al-Qays, the ruler of al-Ḥira. During that period, it served as a place for sacrifices (Ibn al-Faqīh, *al-Buldān*, 214-15).
5. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Farḥat al-Gharī*, 36-37.

I replied, 'I would like to visit the Commander of the Faithful (a) there.' He then asked, 'Are you aware of the virtues of visiting him?' I said, 'No, O son of the Prophet (s). Please enlighten me.' He said, 'When you intend to visit the Commander of the Faithful (a), know that you will also be visiting the bones of Adam, the body of Noah, and the body of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a).'"[1] In another hadith, Imam ʿAlī (a), in his will to his son Imam al-Ḥasan, said, "When my death comes, bury me in this [area] behind [Kufa], in the graves of my brothers Hud and Salih."[2]

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) revealed the burial place of Imam ʿAlī (a) to some of his companions. A hadith narrated by two of his companions recounts: "We went to al-Ḥira, where we sought permission to visit Imam al-Ṣādiq (a). We met the Imam (a) and inquired about the grave of the Commander of the Faithful (a). [Imam al-Ṣādiq (a)] said, 'When you leave [Kufa] and pass through the areas of al-Thawiyya and al-Qāʾim,[3] continue for about one or two arrow ranges.[4] You will then see a series of white hills. Among them is a grave partially demolished by floodwaters. That is the grave of the Commander of the Faithful.'"[5]

It follows from remarks by Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd (d. 656/1258) that there were some doubts among Sunni scholars regarding whether Imam ʿAlī (a) was buried in Najaf. In response to these doubts, Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd states, "His grave is indeed located in al-Gharī, and the claims made by some hadith scholars [i.e., Sunni scholars] about disagreements over his burial place are false and baseless. In fact, his children were well aware of his burial place, as children are generally more knowledgeable about their own fathers' graves. This grave is the one visited by his children, such as Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad [i.e., Imam al-Ṣādiq (a)] and other prominent descendants who traveled to Iraq."[6]

Disclosure of the Imam's Grave and the First Construction

Imam ʿAlī (a) had instructed his son Imam al-Ḥasan (a) to keep his burial place a secret and not to disclose it to anyone.[7] As a result, his burial place remained concealed until the time of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) (114-48 /733-65), who revealed it only to a select group of

1. Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-ziyārāt*, 38.
2. Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, 6: 33-34.
3. Areas in the vicinity of Kufa (see Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 2: 87).
4. An "arrow range" (*ghalwa*) refers to the distance an arrow travels after being shot. Each arrow range is approximately 200 meters (Farāhīdī, *K. al-ʿAyn*, 4: 446).
5. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Farḥat al-Gharī*, 100-1.
6. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 16.
7. See Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Farḥat al-Gharī*, 32, 72; Daylamī, *Irshād al-qulūb*, 2: 435.

his companions.[1] As certain reports suggest, the burial place of Imam ʿAlī (a) was publicly disclosed in the Abbasid period during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170-93 /786-809).[2]

According to some hadiths and historical reports, the primary reason for concealing the location of Imam ʿAlī's burial place was the concern over the hostility of the Banū Umayya and the Kharijites, who might have desecrated his grave.[3] ʿAbd al-Karīm b. al-Ṭāwūs explains the reason for the concealment, stating: "[The reason Imam ʿAlī (a) willed for his grave to be concealed] was due to fears about the Banū Umayya, the Kharijites, and their allies. If they had known the location, they would have exhumed his grave, leading the Banū Hāshim to take actions and potentially igniting a conflict."[4]

In accordance with his will, Imam ʿAlī's burial place remained a secret, known only to Ahl al-Bayt (a) and their close companions. However, after the collapse of the Umayyad government and the rise of the Abbasid government in 132/750, and with concerns about potential Umayyad desecration diminishing, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) revealed Imam ʿAlī's burial place to the general public. He consistently encouraged the Shia to visit his grave with devotion. This disclosure occurred during Imam al-Ṣādiq's journey to Iraq at the command of the Abbasid caliph al-Saffāḥ (r. 132-36/750-54). During this journey, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) placed a tombstone on his ancestor's grave.

In this regard, al-Shaykh al-Mufīd writes, "His burial place remained concealed until Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (a) disclosed it during the Abbasid era."[5] According to a hadith from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), "When I was in al-Ḥīra during the Abbasid period, I visited the grave of the Commander of the Faithful (a) in Najaf, near the Gharī al-Nuʿmān[6] area, where I performed night prayers and then returned before dawn."[7]

Another report from the reign of al-Manṣūr (r. 136-58/754-75) describes a journey by Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) to Kufa. One of his companions, having learned about Imam ʿAlī's burial place from him, asked, "My master, may I inform my companions [Shias] in Kufa about this site?" Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) granted permission and provided him with money for the repair of the grave.[8] This suggests that the first repair of Imam ʿAlī's grave was

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 456.
2. See Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 26-27.
3. See Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *Maqtal Amī al-Muʾminīn*, 72; Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 10; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Farḥat al-Gharī*, 93.
4. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Farḥat al-Gharī*, 27.
5. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 10.
6. There is no mention of an area called "Gharī al-Nuʿmān" in geographical sources. It seems that "al-Nuʿmān" in this context refers to al-Nuʿmān b. al-Mundhir, a king of al-Ḥira, to whom the city was attributed. Therefore, it likely refers to al-Ghariyyayn. Some scholars have also proposed this possibility (Burāqī, *Tārīkh al-Najaf*, 157).
7. Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-ziyārāt*, 37.
8. Ibn al-Mashhadī, *al-Mazār al-kabīr*, 242.

undertaken by Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), likely involving improvements to the grave's appearance or the placement of a tombstone. Based on historical reports and hadiths, it is probable that this reconstruction took place between 139-45/756-63.[1]

According to some accounts, during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd, the burial place of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) was made known to the general public. These accounts also report that the Abbasid caliph took measures to construct a building over the grave. Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd provides a detailed account of this event, quoting ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥāzim:

> "One day, we left Kufa with Hārūn al-Rashīd and crossed the region of al-Ghariyyayn and al-Thawiyya.[2] Along the way, we encountered deer and set our hunting dogs and hawks after them. The hunting animals pursued the deer for an hour until the deer took refuge on a hill nearby. The hawks landed near the hill, and the dogs returned. Hārūn was intrigued by this and, observing that it happened several times, ordered, 'Bring me anyone you find nearby.' We brought an elderly man from the Banū Asad tribe to him. Hārūn asked, 'Tell me what is located on that hill?' The old man replied, 'I will tell you if you guarantee my safety.' Hārūn assured him, 'I make a divine covenant not to harm you.' The old man then said, 'My father, quoting from his ancestors, believed that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib's grave is located on this hill. God has made it a sanctuary where anyone seeking refuge will find safety.'"[3]

In addition to this hadith, ʿAbd al-Karīm b. al-Ṭāwūs cites another report indicating that Hārūn al-Rashīd ordered the construction of a brick building over the mausoleum of Imam ʿAlī (a) and placed a green cloth on his tombstone.[4]

Some scholars have questioned the reports about Hārūn al-Rashīd constructing a shrine for Imam ʿAlī's grave. Their doubts are reinforced by the absence of a valid chain of transmission for these reports and the fact that the described characteristics of the alleged building resemble Islamic architecture from 6-7th/13-14th centuries.[5]

Imam ʿAlī (a) Shrine Over Time

When the burial place of Imam ʿAlī (a) was disclosed, it underwent various constructions and reconstructions. To provide a comprehensive account of those who contributed to the development or renovation of the shrine—whether kings, prominent figures, or

1. See Rafīʿī, "Najaf," 491-94.
2. An area near Kufa (Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 2: 87).
3. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 26-27.
4. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Farḥat al-Gharī*, 122.
5. Māhir, *Mashhad al-Imām ʿAlī*, 133; Farṭūsī, *Marqad wa ḍarīḥ Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, 143-44.

scholars—a lengthy list would be required.[1] Over time, the Imam ʿAlī (a) Shrine has undergone numerous changes. Rulers, commanders, and kings who visited the mausoleum undertook efforts to enhance its structure. In this section, I present a summary of major constructions and reconstructions of the shrine commissioned by rulers and kings throughout different eras.

The Abbasid Era

As noted earlier, after years of concealment, Imam ʿAlī's burial place was publicly disclosed during the Abbasid era. The first significant repair to the site is attributed to Imam al-Ṣādiq and should be dated to the years 139-145/756-763. Additionally, despite some contemporary doubts, the construction of the first building over Imam ʿAlī's burial place is attributed to the reign of the Abbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, between the years 170-193/786-809.

Dāwūd al-ʿAbbāsī's Chest

According to historical accounts, when al-Mutawakkil (r. 232-47/847-61) assumed the caliphate, pressures on Shias increased, and they were prohibited from visiting the burial sites of their Imams (a), particularly Imam ʿAlī (a) and Imam al-Ḥusayn (a). Reports indicate that in 263/876, al-Mutawakkil ordered the demolition of Imam al-Ḥusayn's mausoleum and attempted to exhume his grave. This situation persisted until his son, al-Muntaṣir (r. 247-48/861-62), assumed the caliphate and reversed the policy. He restored protection to the Shias, lifted the ban on visiting the graves of the Shiite Imams, and allowed them to visit their burial sites.[2]

According to a report from the years 269-70/874-83, the demolition extended beyond the burial place of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) to include the shrine of Imam ʿAlī (a) as well. The report describes a secret visit by a Shia individual to Imam ʿAlī's burial site, noting its condition. At that time, the grave was marked only by a piece of stone placed above it as an indication of the burial site, with no shade or building present.[3]

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1. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Farḥat al-Gharī*, 135.

2. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 4: 51.

3. See Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Farḥat al-Gharī*, 141-42. It is important to note that a report from 237/851-52 regarding the construction of the Mosque of Samarra, ordered by al-Mutawakkil, mentions that bricks from Najaf were used in the construction. These bricks were remnants from ceilings, gates, and other building elements (Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, 11: 252). If the demolished building referred to in this report was indeed the one constructed under Hārūn al-Rashīd, then the demolition of Imam ʿAlī's mausoleum must have occurred prior to the time specified in this report (see Ḥakīm, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, 1: 314).

Reports from the year 273/887 indicate that an individual associated with the Abbasid dynasty attempted to exhume Imam ʿAlī's burial place. However, a strange event occurred, leading him to repent and subsequently place a wooden chest upon the grave. This chest later became known as Dāwūd al-ʿAbbāsī's Chest.[1]

Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) provides a detailed account of this event, citing a person named Ismāʿīl b. ʿĪsā al-ʿAbbāsī.[2] Ismāʿīl recounts that his uncle Dāwūd al-ʿAbbāsī gathered his family and sent them to exhume a grave that Shias claimed was the burial site of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a). He instructed them to bring back whatever they found. The team, accompanied by an Abyssinian slave owned by Dāwūd, began digging. When they encountered a hard stone, the strong Abyssinian slave was tasked with breaking it. After striking the stone forcefully with his pickaxe, the noise attracted those outside the grave. They found the slave's right hand covered in blood, but he did not speak. When they brought him to Dāwūd, he was deeply affected by the slave's condition and repented. That same night, Dāwūd al-ʿAbbāsī converted to Shiism and ordered that the grave be filled in and a chest be placed upon it.[3] The chest remained on the grave of the Commander of the Faithful (a) until approximately 282 to 287/895-900.[4] However, due to a reconstruction by Muḥammad b. Zayd al-ʿAlawī (d. 287/900), it was eventually concealed behind the walls built around the grave.[5]

Construction by Muḥammad b. Zayd al-ʿAlawī (d. 287/900)

Muḥammad b. Zayd al-ʿAlawī was a Zaydi ruler of Tabaristan in the northern part of today's Iran. He rose to power in 270/883, succeeding his brother al-Ḥasan b. Zayd.[6] Upon observing the condition of the graves of the Imams (a) in Iraq, which had been demolished years earlier under al-Mutawakkil's orders, he decided to reconstruct the

1. Some scholars identify Dāwūd al-ʿAbbāsī as Dāwūd b. ʿAlī, the uncle of al-Saffāḥ, the first Abbasid caliph (Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, *Tuḥfat al-ʿālam*, 1: 537). However, others refute this claim based on historical evidence (Farṭūsī, *Marqad wa ḍarīḥ Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, 154-56).

2. Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī refers to him as Ismāʿīl b. ʿAdī, while other sources mention him as Ismāʿīl b. ʿĪsā (Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 349; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Farḥat al-Gharī*, 137). In 183/799-800, Ismāʿīl b. ʿĪsā al-ʿAbbāsī served as the ruler of Egypt for three months, appointed by Hārūn al-Rashīd, before being ousted (Kindī al-Miṣrī, *K. al-Wulāt*, 107; Ysuf b. Tagharrī Bardī, *al-Nujūm al-ẓāhira*, 2: 109-10). However, given the time gap between the two events, there are serious doubts about the accuracy of this name.

3. Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, 6: 111-12; see also Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 351-52; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Farḥat al-Gharī*, 136-39.

4. See Ṭabrī, *Tārīkh*, 10: 41-42, 81.

5. Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, 6: 112. It should be noted that, according to al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's account, the person who reconstructed Imam ʿAlī's mausoleum is referred to as al-Ḥasan b. Zayd. However, based on historical evidence from other sources, the correct name is Muḥammad b. Zayd al-ʿAlawī (see Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 6: 123; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Farḥat al-Gharī*, 127-28).

6. Ibn al-Faqīh, *al-Buldān*, 111.

mausoleums. To this end, he allocated an annual budget of 30,000 dirhams. Muḥammad b. Zayd was the first to repair and reconstruct Imam ʿAlī's shrine.[1]

There is no specific information regarding the exact date of this action. However, given the evidence of an opening of political space for Shias and the increased political influence and economic power of Muḥammad b. Zayd around 282/895-96, it can be speculated that the construction likely occurred in that year.[2] Nothing definitive can be said about the specifics of the construction ordered by Muḥammad b. Zayd al-ʿAlawī. Some reports describe the construction as modest, including the erection of a mausoleum and the delimitation of the shrine's boundaries.[3] Some accounts suggest that the building included a brick *ḍarīḥ* (zarih)—a kind of cubic lattice structure—around Imam ʿAlī's burial place.[4] Other accounts also attribute the construction of seventy vaults to the building.[5]

Construction by ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamdān al-Ḥamdānī (d. 317/929)

ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamdān served multiple times as the ruler of Mosul and al-Jazira under the Abbasid caliphs between 293-302/905-915.[6] In 308/920-21, ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamdān received a governmental samite from the Abbasid caliph al-Muqtadir bi-Allāh (r. 295-320/908-29). By 314/926-27, he had reached the peak of his power.[7] According to one account, ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamdān ordered the construction of a sturdy wall around the area where Imam ʿAlī's shrine was located. He built a grand dome over Imam ʿAlī's burial site, installed large gates, adorned the shrine with luxurious curtains, and covered it with costly carpets.[8]

Given that ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamdān gained power between 308-14/920-27, it is likely that these measures were taken within this period. Considering that ʿAbd Allāh was

1. Ibn Isfandiyār, *Tārīkh Ṭabaristān*, 1: 95.

2. According to a report, Muḥammad b. Zayd provided extensive financial aid to the Alawites in various regions in the year 282/895-96. This support, ignored by the caliph al-Muʿtaḍid (r. 279-89/892-902), reflects an opening of political space for Shias in general and Alawites in particular (see Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 21: 9).

3. Ibn Isfandiyār, *Tārīkh Ṭabaristān*, 1: 224. Some sources also mention that Muḥammad b. Zayd dedicated over 20,000 dirhams for the reconstruction of the shrines of Imam ʿAlī (a) and Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) (see Ṣābī, "al-Muntazaʿ min K. al-Tājī," 22; Maḥallī, *al-Ḥaā'iq al-wardiyya*, 1: 226).

4. As noted earlier, Dāwūd al-ʿAbbāsī's chest, which was placed upon Imam ʿAlī's grave, was later concealed behind the walls constructed by Muḥammad b. Zayd al-ʿAlawī (Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, 6: 112).

5. In one hadith, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) prophesied that a shrine with 70 vaults would be built for the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ʿAlī (a). The transmitter of this hadith later witnessed the construction of the shrine by Muḥammad b. Zayd, fulfilling the prophecy (Ṭabarī al-Āmulī al-Ṣaghīr, *Dalā'il al-Imāma*, 459).

6. See Ṭabrī, *Tārīkh*, 11: 206.

7. See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 8: 123, 163.

8. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 1: 240.

entrusted with overseeing the hajj pilgrimage in 311/923 on behalf of al-Muqtadir and possibly passed through Kufa on his way to the Hijaz, some researchers suggest that he may have ordered the construction of Imam ʿAlī's shrine during that year.[1]

According to some reports, after this period, ʿUmar b. Yaḥyā al-ʿAlawī (alive in 339/951) constructed a dome over the shrine of Imam ʿAlī (a) using his own wealth.[2]

Construction by ʿAḍud al-Dawla al-Daylamī (d. 372/983)

One of the largest construction projects at the Imam ʿAlī (a) shrine was undertaken by ʿAḍud al-Dawla al-Daylamī, a prominent minister under the Abbasid caliph al-Ṭāʾiʿ bi-Allāh (r. 363-81/974-91). ʿAḍud al-Dawla began his political career when he was appointed ruler of Fars in 338/949. By 363/973, he had expanded his influence to rule over significant regions of Iran, Iraq, and the Levant.[3] In 367/977, ʿAḍud al-Dawla entered Baghdad and was appointed as a minister of the Abbasid court.[4] He passed away in 372/983 in Baghdad.[5] An important achievement during his lifetime was his reconstruction of the shrine of Imam ʿAlī (a) in Najaf.

From his own wealth, ʿAḍud al-Dawla al-Daylamī funded the construction of a grand and magnificent shrine upon the burial site of Imam ʿAlī (a).[6] In constructing the building, he applied the utmost beauty and allocated numerous endowments for its upkeep.[7] ʿAḍud al-Dawla summoned the most skilled architects to Najaf to contribute to the construction. To ensure its quality, he stayed in the city for one year to oversee the project personally.[8]

There is no precise information about the exact date when the order to reconstruct Imam ʿAlī's shrine was given. Some sources mention 336/947,[9] while others suggest 366/976.[10] However, since ʿAḍud al-Dawla entered Baghdad and gained power in 367/977, these dates seem unlikely. Given a report of his journey to Karbala and Najaf in 371/982, during which he bestowed gifts upon the ministrants and gatekeepers of Imam ʿAlī's

1. Farṭūsī, *Marqad wa ḍarīḥ Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, 177-78.
2. Muḥaddith al-Nūrī, *Mustadrak*, 21: 297.
3. See Ibn al-ʿUmrānī, *al-Inbāʾ*, 177-81.
4. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 11: 289.
5. Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 4: 389.
6. Unknown, *Mujmal al-tawārīkh*, 394; Ibn Khallakān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, 4: 55.
7. Maḥallī, *al-Ḥadāʾiq al-wardiyya*, 1: 226.
8. Daylamī, *Irshād al-qulūb*, 2: 436.
9. Shirwānī, *Riyāḍ al-siyāḥa*, 783.
10. Mustuwfī, *Nuzhat al-qulūb*, 71.

shrine,[1] it appears that the construction was already completed by that year. Thus, it can be speculated that the construction was carried out and completed during the period between ʿAḍud al-Dawla's consolidation of power in Baghdad and 371/982. Additionally, a report mentions the construction of a portico adjacent to Imam ʿAlī's shrine by ʿImrān b. Shāhīn (d. 369/980), ʿAḍud al-Dawla's minister.[2] Since the portico was built after the shrine's construction, it is plausible that ʿAḍud al-Dawla's construction was completed before 369/980, the year of ʿImrān's death. The shrine remained intact until 753/1352-53 when a conflagration led to the destruction of many parts of ʿAḍud al-Dawla's original construction.[3]

After this period, the structure of Imam ʿAlī's shrine did not undergo significant changes. However, it appears that the city of Najaf and Imam ʿAlī's mausoleum continued to receive special attention from Abbasid caliphs, viziers, and local rulers of various regions. In 400/1010, under the orders of al-Ḥasan b. Sahlān (d. 414/1023), the caliph's minister, a sturdy wall was constructed around the area housing Imam ʿAlī's shrine.[4] In 580/1184-85, Ibn Jubayr (d. 614/1217) describes the building of Imam ʿAlī's shrine as grand.[5] In 590/1194, part of the shrine was damaged by an earthquake.[6] It is possible that the reported visit to Imam ʿAlī's shrine by al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh al-ʿAbbāsī (r. 575-622/1180-225) was connected to an order to repair the damage caused by the earthquake.[7]

Al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh (r. 623-40/1126-42) was another Abbasid caliph who, after visiting the shrine, ordered the construction of a *ḍarīḥ* over the burial site of Imam ʿAlī (a).[8] It was not only Abbasid caliphs who took care of the construction of Imam ʿAlī's shrine; local rulers from various regions also dedicated their efforts to its upkeep or bestowed gifts upon it. For instance, Badr al-Dīn Luʾluʾ, an Armenian ruler of Mosul (r. 632-56/1234-59), donated a golden niche worth 1,000 dirhams to the shrine of Imam ʿAlī (a) each year.[9]

1. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Farḥat al-Gharī*, 132-33.
2. See Ibid., 146-49.
3. Ibn ʿInaba, *ʿUmdat al-ṭālib*, 59.
4. Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 27: 243.
5. Ibn Jubayr, *Raḥla*, 169.
6. Ghassānī, *al-ʿAsjad*, 2: 230.
7. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Farḥat al-Gharī*, 122.
8. Ibid., 122.
9. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 13: 214.

The Mongol Era

When the Mongols overthrew the Abbasid government, their rulers continued to take care of Najaf and Imam ʿAlī's shrine. Some researchers suggest that Mongol soldiers were dispatched to Najaf to protect the shrine.[1] In 666/1267, ʿAṭāʾ al-Malik al-Juwaynī (d. 681/1283), a chief official of the Ilkhanate government, ordered the construction of a caravanserai for the accommodation of pilgrims visiting Imam ʿAlī's shrine.[2]

Given the descriptions of Imam ʿAlī's shrine by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 779/1377) during his visit to Najaf in 726/1325, it is evident that the shrine was a central feature of the city, surrounded by numerous bazaars, caravanserais, and schools. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa noted that the walls of the shrine were adorned with colorful tiles and highlighted the use of silver in various parts of the building, as well as the presence of silk curtains.[3]

As noted earlier, most of the structure of Imam ʿAlī's shrine, as described by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, was destroyed by a conflagration in the mid-8th/15th century. Ibn ʿInaba (d. 828/1424) dates this conflagration to 753/1352-53.[4] However, an inscription on the margins of a manuscript from 755/1354-55 indicates that the conflagration occurred that year, with the reconstruction completed by 760/1358-59.[5] While sources do not specify who ordered the reconstruction of the shrine following the conflagration, some researchers attribute the event to the period of the Jalayirid sultanate (740-835/1340-1432), particularly during the reign of of Shaykh Ḥasan the Jalāyir (r. 740-57/1340-56).[6]

Invasion of the Shrine and Its Reconstruction

In 857/1453, Sultan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Mushaʿshaʿī (r. 857-61/1453-57) invaded the cities of Hillah, Karbala, and Najaf. In Dhū l-Qaʿda of that year, he entered Najaf, where he slaughtered people, pillaged the city, and plundered the reservoir of gifts donated to Imam ʿAlī's shrine. He ordered the destruction of the *ḍarīḥ* placed upon Imam ʿAlī's burial site, broke the chest on it, and set the building on fire. In response, Pīrbūdāq (r. 852-70/1448-66), the ruler of Shiraz, dispatched an army to Iraq to confront Sultan ʿAlī. After defeating him, Pīrbūdāq ordered the reconstruction of the destroyed sites, including Imam ʿAlī's shrine. The reconstruction efforts were undertaken in 859/1455.[7]

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1. See Ḥakīm, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, 2: 43.
2. Ibn Fūṭī, *K. al-Ḥawādith*, 391.
3. See Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Raḥla*, 1: 421-22.
4. Ibn ʿInaba, *ʿUmdat al-ṭālib*, 59.
5. Amīn, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 1: 537.
6. Āl Maḥbūba, *Māḍī al-Najaf*, 1: 47.
7. See Ghiyāthī, *Tārīkh al-duwal al-Islāmiyya*, 335-38. Ḍāmin b. Shadqam (alive in 1090 /1679) writes in his account of these events that ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Mushaʿshaʿī converted Imam ʿAlī's burial place and the space under the

According to one account, upon hearing of ʿAlī al-Mushaʿshaʿī's murder, his father, Muḥammad b. Fallāḥ, ordered the return of the stolen assets to the reservoir of Imam ʿAlī's shrine.[1]

The Safavid/Ottoman Era

Although the Safavid and Ottoman eras are relatively recent, and one might expect more detailed information about the constructions and reconstructions of Imam ʿAlī's shrine during this period, there remains a lack of comprehensive details. Most sources from the Persian and Turkish sides focus on Iran and Ottoman territories, with limited information about Iraq and Najaf. Much of what is known about Najaf and the history of Imam ʿAlī's shrine during this time comes from oral accounts recorded by contemporary historians of Najaf. The following information is based on general historical sources from the Safavid era and reports by scholars specializing in the history of Najaf.

Since the Safavid rulers recognized Shiism as the official denomination, they paid particular attention to the shrines of the Imams (a), with special emphasis on the shrine of the first Shiite Imam (a). In 914/1508, Shah Ismail I (r. 907-30/1501-24) conquered Baghdad and incorporated Iraq into his territories. That same year, he visited the sacred shrines of Iraq, including Imam ʿAlī's shrine in Najaf. During his pilgrimage, Shah Ismail I donated valuable gifts to the shrine and honored the inhabitants of the city.[2]

Shah Tahmasp I (r. 930-84/1524-76) visited Imam ʿAlī's shrine in Najaf in 924/1535. At his command, a canal was diverted to Najaf to address the city's drinking water problem.[3] He dedicated efforts to the civil construction of the city, but after his death in 984/1576, the city's development was neglected, and Najaf fell into abandonment and disrepair.[4] Pedro Teixeira, a Portuguese traveler who visited Najaf around thirty years after Shah Tahmasp's death, in 1013/1605, noted signs of disrepair in the city.[5]

In 1033/1623, the Safavid dynasty, under the leadership of Shah Abbas I (r. 996-1038/1587-1629), conquered Iraq and established their forces in the region, including in

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dome into a cookhouse for his soldiers for six months. Despite this, he is reported to have believed in the divinity of Imam ʿAlī, often declaring, "He is the Lord, and the Lord never dies." (Ḍāmin b. Shadqam, *Tuḥfat al-azhār*, 2: 229). Consequently, Ḍāmin b. Shadqam suggests that the primary motive behind Sultan ʿAlī's actions was his belief in the divinity of Imam ʿAlī.

1. Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 104: 14.
2. ʿIzzāwī, *Mawsūʿat tārīkh al-ʿIrāq*, 3: 323.
3. Burāqī, *Tārīkh al-Kūfa*, 200.
4. Ḥirz al-Dīn, *Tārīkh al-Najaf*, 2: 275.
5. Teixiera, *The Travels*, 48.

Najaf and Karbala.[1] In the same year, Shah Abbas I visited the sacred shrines of Iraq, including Imam ʿAlī's shrine. During his ten-day stay, he ordered improvements to the city, and the canal diverted by Shah Tahmasp was repaired to address the drinking water problem once more.[2] During that period, at the command of the Safavid king, the dome of Imam ʿAlī's shrine was reconstructed. Parts of the area around the shrine were cleared, and adjacent lands were acquired to expand the holy site. Shah Abbas I also ordered the construction of an additional fortifying wall to protect the city and appointed a custodian to oversee the shrine's affairs. He allocated many gifts and adornments for the site and made numerous donations to its ministrants and servants.[3]

In 1042/1632, Shah Safi (r. 1038-52/1629-42) visited Najaf.[4] At his behest, the dome of Imam ʿAlī's shrine was reconstructed once again, and architects and engineers were brought to the city to expand and further develop the shrine. Additionally, conduits and canals were constructed to address the water supply issues in the city.[5] The main structure of the current building of Imam ʿAlī's shrine is a remnant of that construction.[6]

Around 1050/1640, the Safavid government lost control over Iraq to the Ottoman Empire. During their rule, some Ottoman rulers visited the sacred cities of the region and, in some cases, undertook the reconstruction of the shrines or donated gifts.[7] In 1070/1659, the Ottoman ruler in Baghdad ordered the construction of a minaret for Imam ʿAlī's shrine.[8] In 1126/1714, the Ottoman ruler of Basra visited the shrine and ordered the replacement of the chest within the *ḍarīḥ* of Imam ʿAlī (a) with a new one. Additionally, the new chest was covered with luxurious cloth, which was unveiled during a ceremony.[9] In 1129/1716, Hasan Pasha, the Ottoman ruler of Iraq, undertook civil constructions in the region. He reconstructed the dome of Imam ʿAlī's shrine and built and adorned a tall ceiling for the surrounding structure.[10]

1. Khalīlī, *Masūʿat al-ʿAtabāt*, 6: 207.
2. Iskandar Munshī, *Tārīkh ʿālam ārā*, 3: 707-8.
3. Ḥirz al-Dīn, *Tārīkh al-Najaf*, 2: 288; see also Iʿtimād al-Salṭana, *Tārīkh muntaẓam*, 2: 918-19.
4. Iʿtimād al-Salṭana, *Tārīkh muntaẓam*, 2: 928.
5. Mīr Khʷānd, *Rawḍat al-ṣafā*, 412-13.
6. Āl Maḥbūba, *Māḍī al-Najaf*, 1: 50.
7. See Ḥirz al-Dīn, *Tārīkh al-Najaf*, 2: 297-368.
8. Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 49.
9. ʿIzzāwī, *Mawsūʿat tārīkh al-ʿIrāq*, 5: 214.
10. Suwaydī, *Ḥadīqat al-Zawrāʾ*, 147.

Afsharid Era

In 1148/1736, Nader Shah Afshar rose to power in Iran. In 1156/1741, he requested the Ottoman Sultan to recognize the Imami Shiism denomination alongside the four Sunni schools. When this request was rejected by the Ottomans, Nader Shah invaded Iraq from the south, conquering the central regions, including Hillah, Najaf, and Karbala.[1] When Baghdad was peacefully conquered, Nader Shah visited Najaf and ordered the gilding of the dome of Imam ʿAlī's shrine, spending a substantial amount of money on this project.[2] During this journey, Gohar-Shah Begum, Nader Shah's wife, allocated a budget for the repair and reconstruction of the courtyard of Imam ʿAlī's shrine. The project was completed in 1160/1746, the final year of Nader's life.[3]

Zand Era

In 1197/1781, at the command of Sultan Ali-Morad Khan Zand (r. 1196-99/1782-85), Navvab Ahmad Khan repaired and reconstructed parts of Imam ʿAlī's shrine, including the courtyard and *saqqākhāna* (water house). Additionally, he donated niches adorned with precious jewelry to the shrine.[4] In 1202/1787, under the orders of Mohammad Jafar Khan Zand (r. 1199-1203/1785-88), a silver *ḍarīḥ* was installed on Imam ʿAlī's burial site. One year later, in 1203/1788, during the final year of Mohammad Jafar Khan's reign, the chest over the burial site was replaced.[5] ʿAlī al-Khāqānī (d. 1980) provides descriptions of this chest and an elaborate report on the inscriptions upon it.[6]

Qajar Era

In 1204/1790, under the orders of Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar (r 1203-11/1789-97), a silver *ḍarīḥ* was built and sent to Imam ʿAlī's shrine.[7] During his reign, Fath-Ali Shah Qajar (r. 1212-50/1797-1834) was particularly dedicated to the construction and reconstruction of sacred sites in Iraq, including Imam ʿAlī's shrine.[8] In 1236/1820, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṣadr Iṣfahānī, the chancellor of the Qajar king, was commissioned to reconstruct the golden covering of the minarets of Imam ʿAlī's shrine.[9] The minarets

1. See Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 148-49.
2. Iʿtimād al-Salṭana, *Tārīkh muntaẓam*, 2: 1129.
3. Astarābādī, *Jahāngushāyi Nādirī*, 394-95; Ḥirz al-Dīn, *Tārīkh al-Najaf*, 2: 334.
4. Ḥirz al-Dīn, *Tārīkh al-Najaf*, 2: 363.
5. Kūfī, *Nuzhat al-Gharī*, 51-52; see also Mīr Khʷānd, *Rawḍat al-ṣafā*, 594.
6. Khāqānī, *Shuʿarāʾ al-Gharī*, 1: 13-14.
7. ʿIzzāwī, *Mawsūʿat tārīkh al-ʿIrāq*, 6: 127.
8. See Mīr Khʷānd, *Rawḍat al-ṣafā*, 614.
9. Burāqī, *Tārīkh al-Najaf*, 462.

were gilded during the Afsharid era at the command of Nader Shah. However, due to ground subsidence, the minarets became bent, causing some of the golden bricks to dislodge. Consequently, the king commissioned the chancellor to undertake their repair.[1] According to one account, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Iṣfahānī also dedicated a silver gate to the shrine and ordered its installation. This act prompted some of the inhabitants of Najaf to donate and install additional silver doors to the shrine.[2]

In 1216/1801-2, a Wahhabi army led by Saud bin Muhammad invaded Karbala and plundered Imam al-Ḥusayn's shrine. They demolished the burial site, slaughtered the people, and pillaged the city, stealing the precious objects from the shrine of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a).[3] Ali Pasha, the Ottoman ruler of Iraq, concerned about the possible arrival of the Wahhabi army in Najaf and the potential plundering of Imam ʿAlī's shrine, relocated the precious objects and gifts stored there to Baghdad and the shrine of Imam al-Kāẓim (a). However, the Wahhabis were stopped by Ottoman soldiers and were unable to proceed to Najaf.[4] This was not the end. Between 1218-26/1803-11, the Wahhabis launched attacks on Najaf but faced resistance from the people and the students of its seminary, preventing them from entering the city.[5] The precious objects kept in the reservoir of Imam ʿAlī's shrine were returned to Najaf in 1238/1823.[6] Under the supervision of al-Shaykh Mūsā Kāshif al-Ghiṭā' (d. 1243/1827), the objects were sealed and stored in the reservoir of gifts, remaining unopened until Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar's visit to Najaf in 1287/1870.[7]

In 1262/1845, Muʿtamad al-Dawla (d. 1263/1847), the minister of Mohammad Shah Qajar (r. 1250-64/1834-48), transported the gifts from the Iranian king to Imam ʿAlī's shrine and was tasked with reconstructing its silver *ḍarīḥ*.[8] William Loftus (d. 1858), a British geographer, archaeologist, and traveler, visited Najaf in 1270/1853 and provided an account of the shrine's configuration at that time. Although he was not allowed to approach the burial site of Imam ʿAlī (a) due to his non-Muslim status, his descriptions of the courtyard are intriguing. With evident admiration, he describes the building of Imam ʿAlī's shrine as rectangular, similar to most Islamic mosques. He notes the walls of

1. Ḥirz al-Dīn, *Tārīkh al-Najaf*, 2: 421.
2. Naqdī, *Nuzhat al-muḥibbīn*, 300.
3. Ibn Bishr, *ʿUnwān al-majd*, 1: 257-58.
4. Karkūlī, *Dawḥat al-wuzarā'*, 217-18.
5. See Ḥirz al-Dīn, *Tārīkh al-Najaf*, 2: 386-88, 389-90, 393-98.
6. Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, *Tuḥfat al-ʿālam*, 1: 561.
7. See Ḥakīm, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, 2: 147-49.
8. Kūfī, *Nuzhat al-Gharī*, 73.

the courtyard covered with colorful tiles and the beauty of their arrangement. Other features that caught his attention included the Quranic inscriptions around the courtyard and its entrances, which were in golden color, as well as the grand gilded dome. He also mentions three minarets in three of the four corners of the courtyard, two of which were adorned with golden sheets.[1] He also refers to local anecdotes about a treasure buried behind the walls of the shrine's reservoir of gifts.[2]

In 1281/1864, one of the two minarets of the shrine was distorted and subsequently destroyed and rebuilt.[3] In 1287/1870, Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar (r. 1264-1313/1848-96) planned a visit to the sacred sites of Iraq with members of his royal cabinet. The Qajar king's caravan arrived in Najaf on Ramadan 13, 1287/December 7, 1870.[4] At the king's request, the reservoir containing the precious objects of Imam ʿAlī's shrine was reopened after about 17 years. He ordered the unsealing of the chests, and under the supervision of trustees, everything was documented and inventoried. Additionally, he donated a diamond inscribed with Surah al-Mulk (67) to the shrine.[5]

In 1295/1877, Mushīr al-Salṭana Shīrāzī, a relative of Nasser al-Din Shah, was assigned the task of constructing a new *ḍarīḥ* for the burial site of Imam ʿAlī (a). This *ḍarīḥ* was designed differently from previous ones, and its construction was completed on Ramadan 1, 1298/July 28, 1881, after which it was installed.[6] In 1305/1887, following the completion of repairs to the dome of the shrine,[7] a clock was installed above the eastern gate of the shrine on behalf of Amin al-Mulk, Nasser al-Din Shah's minister.[8] Between 1315-16/1897-98, under the orders of Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876-1909), part of the northern minaret of the shrine was demolished and rebuilt. Additionally, he ordered the reconstruction of the stone pavement in the shrine's courtyard.[9]

1. Muḥammad Rashīd al-Saʿdī (d. 1358/1939), while passing through Najaf in 1285/1868, described the shrine as featuring four gilded minarets (Saʿdī, *Qurrat al-ʿayn*, 42).
2. See Loftus, *Travels and Researches*, 51-53.
3. Kūfī, *Nuzhat al-Gharī*, 73-74.
4. Iʿtimād al-Salṭana, *Tārīkh muntaẓam*, 2: 1916.
5. See Ḥirz al-Dīn, *Tārīkh al-Najaf*, 2: 519-22.
6. Kūfī, *Nuzhat al-Gharī*, 74; Ḥirz al-Dīn, *Tārīkh al-Najaf*, 2: 547.
7. See Kūfī, *Nuzhat al-Gharī*, 74-75.
8. Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, *Tuḥfat al-ʿālam*, 1: 557.
9. Ḥirz al-Dīn, *Tārīkh al-Najaf*, 3: 40, 42.

Various Sections of the Shrine and Contemporary Reconstructions

Reconstructions and expansions of Imam ʿAlī's shrine have continued into the contemporary era. This section will outline various important parts of the shrine and provide a report on the reconstructions carried out at this sacred site.[1]

Imam ʿAlī's Shrine

A significant part of the shrine is the location of Imam ʿAlī's sacred grave, known as "al-Ḥaram" (shrine/sanctuary). In 1354/1936, Osman Ali Khan, the king of Hyderabad, donated a crystalline niche to the shrine, which was installed on Eid al-Ghadir of the same year. Additionally, in 1356/1940, the king of the Indian Bohras[2] undertook the replacement and renewal of the stone pavement. After the overthrow of the Ba'ath regime in 2003, many parts of Imam ʿAlī's shrine, along with other Iraqi sacred sites, were reconstructed and repaired. Additionally, the entrance gates of the shrine were replaced between 2007 and 2011.

The Zarih

As mentioned earlier, the *ḍarīḥ* (or zarih) of Imam ʿAlī's shrine—the lattice cubic structure placed over the burial site—has undergone various replacements, repairs, and reconstructions over time. In 1360/1941, Taher Saifuddin, a leader of the Indian Bohra community, undertook the construction of a new *ḍarīḥ* for Imam ʿAlī's burial site, which was installed on Rajab 13, 1361/July 27, 1942. In 2005, repairs were made to the *ḍarīḥ*, and some of its golden covers were reconstructed, with the project completed on Shʿabān 5, 1427/August 30, 2006. Additionally, between 2009 and 2016, the four pillars of the *ḍarīḥ* were replaced and a new gate was installed.

The Chest

One of the first constructions at Imam ʿAlī's shrine was the placement of a chest over the tombstone. Over the years, various chests were donated by kings and prominent figures and installed at the site. In 1361/1942, during the replacement of the *ḍarīḥ*, a new chest was built and installed, and a glass protector was placed around it to shield it from dust and other damage. During the Shabaniyya Uprisings in 1991, the Ba'ath forces breached the shrine while suppressing the revolutionaries, causing damage to the building, the

1. This part is derived from the official website of Imam ʿAlī's shrine: imamali.net, "Maʿālim al-Marqad al-ʿAlavī."
2. The Bohra are a branch of the Ismaili denomination, with most of their followers residing in regions of India and Pakistan (Daftary, "Buhra.").

ḍarīḥ, and the chest. In the 2017 repairs and reconstruction of the *ḍarīḥ*, the glass protector of the chest was also replaced.

The Dome and Minarets

As discussed earlier, the initial construction of a dome over Imam ʿAlī's shrine dates back to 3rd or 4th/10th or 11th century. The dome has undergone various repairs and reconstructions throughout different periods. During Nader Shah's era, it was covered with a golden sheet. Rulers and prominent figures in each era have made efforts to reconstruct and repair the golden cover of the shrine's dome. The dome was repaired in 1348/1929 and 1372/1953 due to visible cracks. In 1388/1968, a merchant from Najaf funded extensive repairs and reconstruction of the dome. The project, which included structural reinforcements and the renewal of the golden cover, was completed in 1391/1971.

During the 1991 uprisings, the dome was damaged by a rocket fired by Ba'ath forces. It was repaired in 2014, with the last major reconstruction occurring that same year. During this reconstruction, the golden cover was restored using the latest technologies.

The minarets of Imam ʿAlī's shrine also underwent frequent repairs and reconstructions. Some of the inscriptions on the minarets were removed by the Ba'ath government due to denominational disputes. After the overthrow of the regime in 2003, these inscriptions, which had been relocated to the shrine's reservoir, were returned to their original locations. Additionally, the golden covers of the minarets were repaired between 2009 and 2013.

ʿImrān b. Shāhīn's Mosque

ʿImrān b. Shāhīn, the founder of the Shahinid dynasty, was the ruler of southern Iraq. In 338/949-50, he engaged in conflict with the Abbasid government. After a series of battles and a final compromise with the central government in Baghdad, he secured legitimacy for his rule over southern Iraq. He passed away in 369/980.[1]

The mosque now known as the Mosque of ʿImrān b. Shāhīn was originally built as a portico for the shrine of Imam ʿAlī (a). During the Safavid era reconstructions and expansions, it was transformed into a mosque. The story behind the construction of this portico is as follows: Due to ʿImrān's conflicts with ʿAḍud al-Dawla al-Daylamī, the Abbasid minister, ʿAḍud al-Dawla issued a prosecution order against him. ʿImrān fled to Najaf and hid there to evade Abbasid soldiers. During a visit by ʿAḍud al-Dawla to Imam ʿAlī's shrine, ʿImrān had the opportunity to meet him near the burial place and received

1. Zirkilī, *al-Aʿlām*, 5: 70.

a safe conduct. As a result, he was pardoned and honored by the Abbasid minister. In fulfillment of a vow he had made, ʿImrān constructed a portico adjacent to the shrine, which later became known as ʿImrān b. Shāhīn's portico.[1]

During the Safavid era, when Imam ʿAlī's shrine was expanded, part of ʿImrān b. Shāhīn's portico was integrated into the shrine, reducing its original size. In later periods, the mosque was not used publicly and was instead utilized as a storehouse for items belonging to the shrine. After the overthrow of the Ba'ath regime in Iraq, in 2007, the mosque began to be reconstructed and repaired. In 2010, the reconstruction project of ʿImrān b. Shāhīn's mosque was completed, and it was transformed into a place of study for seminary students. Several scholars of the Najaf seminary are buried there.

Gharawiyya Seminary School

The scholarly tradition of Shiism in Najaf began after al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's migration from Baghdad to Najaf in 448/1056.[2] During that period, Najaf became a center for teaching and studying religious fields for Shias. Tourists and travel writers visiting Najaf often mention the presence of seminary schools in the city. In recounting his journey to Najaf in 726/1325, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa reports the existence of numerous seminary schools in the city.[3] One of the oldest seminary schools in Najaf is the Gharawiyya Seminary School (*al-Madrasa al-Gharawiyya*). Its initial construction dates back to the Safavid era in the early 11th/17th century under the orders of Shah Abbas I.[4] The school is located in the northern part of the courtyard of Imam ʿAlī's shrine.

In 1350/1931, after repairs and reconstructions, the school was transformed into an accommodation facility for pilgrims of the shrine. Subsequently, it was abandoned, and its doors remained closed to both pilgrims and seminary students. After the overthrow of the Ba'ath regime in 2003, the school was reconstructed and repaired, once again becoming a place of study for seminary students. Between 2005 and 2009, the building was demolished and rebuilt, transforming it into a new seminary school for teaching religious studies.

Alawi Hospital

According to some studies, the initial construction of Dār al-Shifā' al-ʿAlawī (Alawi Hospital) dates back to the era of Shah Safi. During an expansion project of the shrine in

1. See Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Faḥat al-Gharī*, 146-48.
2. Ḥirz al-Dīn, *Tārīkh al-Najaf*, 1: 100-1.
3. Ibn Baṭūṭa. *Raḥla*, 1: 421.
4. Āl Maḥbūba, *Māḍī al-Najaf*, 1: 127.

1042/1632, it was built adjacent to the courtyard.[1] The hospital provided healthcare services to pilgrims and neighbors of Imam ʿAlī's shrine until 1368/1949, when most of its building was demolished to make way for a project to expand the streets around the shrine. The remaining parts were used as a seminary school. Between the 1970s and 1980s, all adjacent buildings of the shrine were demolished, leaving no remnants of the Alawi Hospital.

In 2012, as part of the reconstruction of historical sites associated with the shrine, a new healthcare center was designed to serve pilgrims. The construction project for Dār al-Shifāʾ al-ʿAlawī began in 2014 and was completed on Rabīʿ I 20, 1437/January 1, 2016. The building is located in the northern part of the courtyard.

Library of the Shrine

The library of Imam ʿAlī's shrine (*Maktabat al-Rawḍa al-Ḥaydariyya*) has been known by various names throughout history, the most renowned being al-Khizāna al-Gharawiyya (Gharawiyya Reservoir). A significant contribution by ʿAḍud al-Dawla al-Daylamī to the expansion and construction of the shrine was the creation of a reservoir for precious items. After al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's migration to Najaf and the establishment of the city's seminary, the area flourished as seminary students from various parts of the Islamic world came to Najaf to study religious fields. After their education, they often returned to their hometowns, leaving behind the manuscripts they had written or studied in the city. As a result, the reservoir of the shrine's precious items became a rich repository of manuscripts.

In 755/1354-55, a conflagration in the shrine destroyed many of the precious manuscripts held in the reservoir. In 760/1359 CE, al-Sayyid Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Āwī (d.?), with the assistance of Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn al-Ḥillī (d. 771/1369-70), a prominent scholar of the period, began to rebuild the library of the shrine. He managed to collect many precious and rare manuscripts from both inside and outside Iraq and added them to the library. He named the place al-Khizāna al-ʿAlawiyya (Alawi Reservoir).

The library thrived until the late 13th/20th century, but was subsequently neglected due to the denominational and divisive policies of the Ba'ath regime in Iraq. Many of its precious manuscripts were on the verge of destruction under these unfavorable conditions. After the regime's downfall, scholars in Najaf worked to revive the library. In 2005, the library was reopened, and its building was reconstructed and expanded in 2013. Al-Sayyid Hāshim al-Mīlānī provides a detailed account of the library's history, activities,

1. Ḥirz al-Dīn, *Tārīkh al-Najaf*, 1: 383.

and precious manuscripts in his book *al-Maktaba al-Ḥaydariyya: juhūdᵘⁿ wa jihād* (Al-Haydariyya Library: efforts and struggle).

Nahj al-Balāgha*

Abolfazl Hafezian Baboli

Introduction

Nahj al-balāgha, meaning "The Path of Eloquence," is the title given by al-Sharīf Muḥammad b. Abī Aḥmad al-Mūsawī, known with the teknonym Abū l-Ḥasan and titled al-Sayyid al-Raḍī, to his compilation of the statements of the Master of the God-wary, ʿAlī (a).

Nahj al-balāgha is the most renowned and enduring work of al-Sayyid al-Raḍī, compiled in the year 400/1009, six years before his passing. Drawing upon his vast knowledge, refined literary taste, and exceptional discernment, he selected an unparalleled collection of sermons, sayings, letters, wills, proclamations, concise words of wisdom, several supplications, and a covenant from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ʿAlī (a).

Nahj al-balāgha is an encyclopedic repository of Islamic thought that, after the Quran and the hadiths of the Prophet, stands as the most significant source for understanding Islam and its religious values. It is a pure spring that flows from the divine being of the Commander of the Faithful (a), a matchless orchard exuding the fragrance of divine revelation and the aroma of the Prophet's words. This book encompasses lofty wisdom,

* "Nahj al-Balāgha." In *Danishnāma-yi Imām ʿAlī (a)*, 12: 9-92. Tehran: Pajūhish-gāhi Farhang wa Andīsha-yi Islāmī, 1385 Sh.

luminous admonitions, divine wayfaring, an educational system, principles of governance, historical traditions, and true mysticism. It is a book that nurtures individuals and shapes societies, becoming not only a path of eloquence but also a guiding beacon of guidance.

Nahj al-balāgha is a clear path of knowledge and action, a shell containing pearls of wisdom, and a treasury of eloquent gems. Its profound and compelling admonitions, embedded within its sermons and letters, captivate hearts, while its concise maxims and brief words of wisdom serve as a guarantor of prosperity in both this world and the hereafter.[1]

In the realm of purification and instruction, *Nahj al-balāgha* stands alongside the Quran as a comprehensive guide to attaining worldly prosperity and afterlife sovereignty. The distinction, however, lies in the fact that the Quran was revealed as divine revelation upon the heart of the Prophet (s), while *Nahj al-balāgha* is the composition of the Gate of the City of the Prophet's Knowledge, the leader of monotheists, and the exemplar of the pious—ʿAlī (a).

There have been discussions about *Nahj al-balāgha* and its contents for centuries, and numerous commentaries, interpretations, and translations have been written in various languages. Hundreds of books and articles have been dedicated to this work, to the extent that compiling them all would constitute a vast library. In this study, drawing upon the resources and contributions of scholars and writers who have been captivated by the words of the Imam, we provide a concise introduction to this esteemed book and examine the body of literature surrounding it in six sections.

1. Compilation of *Nahj al-balāgha*

Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Mūsawī, known as al-Sayyid al-Raḍī and al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, was born in the second half of the fourth/10th century (359/970) in Baghdad and lived until 406/1015. Thus, his lifetime coincided with a period of the Abbasid Caliphate and the rule of the Buyids over Iraq (334–447/964-1056).

Since al-Sayyid al-Raḍī belonged to a noble lineage of Hashemite Sayyids (descendants of the Prophet) and the family of Abū Ṭālib (a), he was given the title "*al-Sharīf*" (meaning noble). His father traced his lineage back to Imam al-Kāẓim (a) through five generations, while his mother was a descendant of Imam al-Sajjād (a). His father, Abū Aḥmad Ḥusayn b. Mūsā, held the position of *naqīb al-Ṭālibiyyīn* (leader of the Ṭālibid Sayyids) and transferred this role to his son, al-Sayyid al-Raḍī, in 380/990. His

1. Tihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 14: 111.

brother, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā ʿAlam al-Hudā, was a distinguished Shiite scholar who was born four years before al-Sayyid al-Raḍī. Together, they studied under many renowned teachers of their time, and al-Murtaḍā had a profound influence on al-Raḍī's works and life. Regarding their scholarly and literary status, it has been said: "Had al-Raḍī not existed, al-Murtaḍā would have been the greatest poet; and had al-Murtaḍā not existed, al-Raḍī would have been the most learned of all."

Al-Raḍī acquired a diverse range of knowledge from the scholars of his time in Baghdad. He studied Arabic grammar and lexicography under Abū ʿAlī al-Fārisī, Ibn Jinnī, and al-Marzubānī; the Muʿtazilite school of thought under Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār; and Imami jurisprudence and theological principles under al-Shaykh al-Mufīd. Additionally, he benefited from the teachings of scholars in exegesis, hadith, philosophy, *kalām* (theology), and the rhetorical sciences.

Al-Sayyid al-Raḍī nurtured numerous students and, to facilitate their education, established a school near his residence in the Karkh district of Baghdad, which he named "*Dār al-ʿIlm*" (House of Knowledge). This scholarly center comprised three sections: a teaching hall (*madras*), residential quarters (*ḥujra*) for students, and a vast library. The library was an exceptional collection, housing some of the most valuable and important Arabic and Islamic sources. Many distinguished scholars graduated from this renowned school, including Sayyid ʿAbd Allāh al-Kabāyakī al-Ḥusaynī al-Jurjānī, Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Ḥalwānī, Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad al-Dūrīstī, ʿAlī b. Bandār, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Khuzāʿī al-Nīshābūrī, and Abū l-Ḥasan al-Mihyār al-Daylamī.

Al-Sayyid al-Raḍī was a preeminent figure in Arabic literature, excelling in both prose and poetry. Despite his short life, he authored numerous significant works, each of great literary and scholarly value. However, only a few of his writings have survived, while many others have been lost, with only their titles remaining. The list of his known works includes: (1) *Akhbār quḍāt Baghdād*, (2) *Inshirāḥ al-ṣadr*, (3) *Taʿlīq khilāf al-fuqahāʾ*, (4) *Taʿlīqa ʿalā al-īyḍāḥ*, (5) *Talkhīṣ al-bayān ʿan maʿājiz al-Qurʾān*, (6) *al-Ḥasan min shiʿr al-Ḥusayn*, (7) *Ḥaqāʾiq al-taʾwīl fī mutashābih al-tanzīl*, (8) *Khaṣāʾiṣ al-aʾimma*, (9) *Dīwān shiʿr* (in two volumes), (10) *Rasāʾil*, (11) *al-Ziyādāt fī shiʿr Abī Tammām*, (12) *al-Ziyādāt fī shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*, (13) *Sīra wālida Ṭāhir*, (14) *Mā dār baynahu wa-bayn Abī Isḥāq*, (15) *Majāzāt al-āthār al-Nabawiyya*, (16) *al-Mukhtār min shiʿr Abī Isḥāq*, (17) *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān*, and (18) *Nahj al-balāgha*.[1]

1. See Ṭabāṭabāʾī, "al-Mutibaqqī min makhṭūṭāt Nahj al-balāgha," 41-50.

The blessed life of al-Sharīf al-Raḍī came to an end on Sunday, the 6th of Muḥarram, 406/June 26, 1015, at the age of 47. His pure body was initially buried at his residence, but after some time, it was transferred to Karbala, where he was laid to rest beside the grave of his father, Ḥusayn b. Mūsā.[1]

Attribution of *Nahj al-balāgha* to al-Sharīf al-Raḍī

There is conclusive evidence and strong supporting arguments affirming the authenticity of *Nahj al-balāgha*'s compilation by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī. The first recorded doubt regarding the attribution of these statements to Imam ʿAlī was expressed by Ibn Khallikān al-Irbilī (d. 681/1283), the author of *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*. Writing more than 250 years after the compilation of *Nahj al-balāgha*, in his brief biography of al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā—al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's brother—he states without presenting any evidence: "People have differed regarding the book *Nahj al-balāgha*, which is a collection of the words of Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib [(a)], may God be pleased with him. Some have questioned whether its author was al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā or his brother, al-Raḍī. Others have claimed that these words do not belong to ʿAlī, but rather, they were composed by the compiler himself."[2]

After Ibn Khallikān, other writers repeated the same unfounded claim, including Ibn al-Athīr al-Jazarī (d. 739/1338-39) in *Mukhtaṣar al-wafayāt*, al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) in *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) in *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*, al-Yāfiʿī (d. 768/1367) in *Mirʾāt al-jinān*, Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) in *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449) in *Lisān al-mīzān*, and Ibn ʿImād al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1089/1679) in *Shadharāt al-dhahab*. However, none of them provided any evidence or proof to substantiate their claim.[3]

Among contemporary writers, figures such as Aḥmad Amīn, Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī (author of *al-Aʿlām*), Jurjī Zaydān, Shawqī Ḥanīf, and Farīd Wajdī, as well as Orientalists like Brockelmann, have largely repeated Ibn Khallikān's claim while also attempting to present some arguments in support of their view.[4]

Two claims have been put forward in this regard: first, that the compiler of these statements was al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā, not al-Sayyid al-Raḍī; second, that all or most of these statements are fabricated and falsely attributed to Imam ʿAlī (a).

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1. Numerous monographs have been written about al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's life.

2. Ibn Khallakān, *Wafayāt*, 3: 313, 4: 414.

3. Dhahabī, *Mizān al-iʿtidāl*, 3: 124; Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, 21: 7; Yāfiʿī, *Mirʾāt al-jinān*, 3: 55; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 12: 3, 53; ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, 4: 256; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 3: 257.

4. Amīn, *Fajr al-Islām*, 148, 149; Zirkilī, *al-Aʿlām*, 4: 278; Zaydān, *Tārīkh Ādāb al-lugha al-ʿarabiyya*, 2: 333; Wajdī, *Dāʾirat al-maʿārif*, 4: 260; Brockelmann, *Tārīkh al-Adab al-ʿarabī*, 2: 64.

The question of whether the words in *Nahj al-balāgha* are fabricated will be addressed in later sections. However, the dispute over whether its compiler was al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā or his brother, al-Sayyid al-Raḍī, stems from ignorance and a lack of careful examination.

Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī explicitly states in five places within *al-Majāzāt al-Nabawiyya* that he compiled *Nahj al-balāgha* from the statements and writings of Imam ʿAlī Amīr al-Muʾminīn (the Commander of the Faithful). He also affirms this in *Ḥaqāʾiq al-taʾwīl* and in the preface to *Khaṣāʾiṣ al-aʾimma*, where he mentions that he authored a book collecting ʿAlī's sermons, letters, admonitions, and words of wisdom, naming it *Nahj al-balāgha*.[1] Moreover, there is no doubt that *al-Majāzāt al-nabawiyya*, *Ḥaqāʾiq al-taʾwīl*, and *Khaṣāʾiṣ al-aʾimma* are authored by al-Sayyid al-Raḍī. In addition to these statements, further evidence and indications confirm this attribution.

First, a manuscript of *Nahj al-balāgha* in the handwriting of al-Sharīf al-Raḍī existed until the time of Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd (d. 656 AH), and he cited from that manuscript in his commentary on *Nahj al-balāgha*.[2]

Second, in many manuscripts of *Nahj al-balāgha*, its authorship is attributed to al-Sharīf al-Raḍī.

Third, several scholars of hadith have transmitted *Nahj al-balāgha* from al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, who we will refer to as the transmitters of *Nahj al-balāgha*.

Fourth, numerous "transmission permissions" (*ijāzat al-riwāya*) from scholars and hadith practitioners have been preserved, explicitly attributing *Nahj al-balāgha* to al-Sharīf al-Raḍī.[3] Some of these will be mentioned in the section on the transmission permissions of *Nahj al-balāgha*.

Fifth, there exist numerous commentaries and translations of *Nahj al-balāgha*, all of which identify al-Sharīf al-Raḍī as its author.

Sixth, within Shiite sources, there is no doubt regarding the attribution of *Nahj al-balāgha* to al-Sharīf al-Raḍī. In all Shiite references and sources, he is identified as its

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *al-Majāzāt al-babawiyya*, 35-36, 195, 247, 387; Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Ḥaqāʾiq al-taʾwīl*, 287.

2. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 3: 92.

3. The late ʿAllāma Amīnī states: "I examined a manuscript of *Nahj al-balāgha* in the possession of a scholar in Najaf, which contained a transmission permission (*ijāza*) written by al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā in his own handwriting, granting one of his students permission to transmit *Nahj al-balāgha*. In it, al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā explicitly stated: 'I have granted permission for the transmission of my brother's book (*Nahj al-balāgha*)'" (Ḥusaynī al-Khaṭīb, *Maṣādir Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 187).

author. Al-Najāshī (d. 450/1058), who lived before Ibn Khallikān, also attributed *Nahj al-balāgha* to al-Sharīf al-Raḍī.[1]

Some have attempted to justify Ibn Khallikān's mistake by stating: "This error occurred because both brothers bore the title 'Murtaḍā,' which they had inherited from their grandfather."[2] However, this justification is not acceptable, as al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā and al-Sayyid al-Raḍī were both well-known and distinguished figures in scholarly circles and among biographers and scholars of *rijāl* (reliability assessment of hadith transmitters). Ibn Khallikān was well aware of their identities.

Motivation for Writing

In the preface to *Nahj al-balāgha*, al-Sharīf al-Raḍī explains his motivation for compiling and composing the work as follows:

> "In the days of my youth and the flourishing years of life, I began writing a book on the characteristics (*khaṣā'iṣ*) of the Imams, which encompassed their noble biographies and eloquent sayings... What I had written was arranged into several sections and chapters, and in the final chapter, I included the concise words of ʿAlī (a) regarding admonitions, wisdom, proverbs, and etiquette. A group of friends admired this chapter, marveled at its unparalleled insights, and were dazzled by its brilliant passages. They requested that I undertake the composition of a book that would contain a selection of the speeches of the Commander of the Faithful [Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī (a)], covering all aspects and branches of his statements. For they knew well that these words embodied all the wonders of eloquence, the finest aspects of rhetoric, the gems of Arabic literature, and captivating religious and worldly teachings—qualities that, in their entirety and comprehensiveness, are not found in any other speech or book ... Thus, I responded to their request by embarking on this great task, knowing well the immense benefit, widespread renown, and stored reward that lay within it. Through this effort, I sought not only to highlight the many virtues, countless merits, and hidden excellences of the Commander of the Faithful but also to reveal his supreme status in the art of oratory, for he alone among the early predecessors reached the pinnacle of rhetorical perfection ..."[3]

1. Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 283.
2. Munzawī, *Fihrist*, 2: 306.
3. See Jaʿfarī, *Sayyid Raḍī*, 62-63.

The Structuring of *Nahj al-balāgha*

Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī arranged Imam ʿAlī's statements in a refined and eloquent manner. Regarding the organization and classification of its contents, he writes:

> "I observed that the words of the Commander of the Faithful (a) revolve around three central themes: first, sermons and commands; second, letters and messages; and third, wise sayings and admonitions. With the grace of the Almighty, I first selected his eloquent sermons, followed by his remarkable letters, and finally, his wise sayings and precious words, placing each in a separate section and assigning blank pages to them. This was done so that if, due to haste, I overlooked any content at present, those blank pages would serve as space for later additions when I came across the missing material… In this book, I have included extraordinary insights and brilliant passages, yet my aim has not been to maintain chronological order or continuity between the speeches… It has often happened that I found a chosen statement through one narration and recorded it as such, but later, I encountered the same statement in another narration, expressed differently—sometimes in more elaborate wording or in a more refined style. A greater degree of authenticity in the latter narration, along with a sense of duty to preserve and safeguard these valuable rhetorical gems, has compelled me to include it as well."[1]

Nahj al-balāgha is organized into three main sections:

First: Sermons and Sayings. This section contains 241 sermons and statements of Imam ʿAlī, the Commander of the Faithful (a). Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī assigned specific titles to only four of them: (1) Sermon 3, known as "al-Shiqshiqiyya," (2) sermon 83, known as "al-Gharraʾ," (3) sermon 91, known as "al-Ashbāḥ," and (4) sermon 192, known as "al-Qāṣiʿa."

Second: Letters. This section comprises 79 correspondences, categorized as follows: 63 letters, 12 wills, counsels, and directives, 2 decrees, 1 supplication, and 1 covenant.

Third: Sayings of Wisdom. This section includes 480 concise and insightful maxims.

1. Ibid., 63-64.

The Reason for the Book's Title

Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī explains the reasoning behind naming this invaluable compilation *Nahj al-balāgha*[1] (The Path of Eloquence or The Clear Way of Rhetoric)[2] as follows: "After completing the book, I found it fitting to name it *Nahj al-balāgha*, for it opens the doors of eloquence and oratory to its reader and brings their objectives within reach. Both scholars and students are in need of it, and it contains what is sought by both the rhetorician and the devout."[3]

He chose a title for this timeless book that, in the view of many literary connoisseurs and scholars, is the most fitting. Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbduh (d. 1905) writes in the preface to his commentary on *Nahj al-balāgha*: "I know of no name more appropriate and deserving than this, one that truly conveys its meaning. Nor can I describe it in a way that surpasses what this title already signifies."[4]

Transmitters of *Nahj al-balāgha*

After compiling *Nahj al-balāgha*, al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, following the scholarly tradition of his time, recited the text to his students, who listened to its contents directly from the author and received authorization or permission to transmit it. Both Quṭb al-Rāwandī (d. 573/1178) in *Minhāj al-Barāʿa* and ʿAlī b. Zayd al-Bayhaqī (d. 565/1169) in *Maʿārij Nahj al-balāgha* recorded the names of several individuals who transmitted *Nahj al-balāgha* directly from al-Sharīf al-Raḍī: (1) Sayyida Naqība, daughter of al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā ʿAlam al-Hudā,[5] (2) Abū Manṣūr al-ʿUkbarī (d. 472/1080),[6] (3) ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Dunyājī, known as Sibṭ Bishr al-Ḥāfī,[7] (4) Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Ḥalwānī,[8] (5) Muḥammad b. Hammām al-Baghdādī, (6) Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad al-Dūrīstī (d. c.

1. In *Muʿjam al-Maṭbūʿāt*, the title of the book is recorded as *Nahj al-balāgha wa-Mashraʿ al-Faṣāḥa* (Sirkīs, *Muʿjam al-maṭbūʿāt*, 1124). However, this addition is not found in other sources. It is likely that this extension was derived from the words of al-Sharīf al-Raḍī himself in the preface of the book, where he describes Imam ʿAlī's speech as *"mashraʿ al-faṣāḥa wa-mansha' al-balāgha"* (the fountainhead of eloquence and the source of rhetoric) (see Jalālī, *Dirāsat*[um] *ḥawla Nahj al-balāgha*, 216).
2. Tustarī, *Bahj al-ṣabāgha*, 1: 121, 122.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, Introduction.
4. Ibid., Muḥammad ʿAbduh Introduction.
5. Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamā'*, 5: 409; Kaḥḥāla, *Aʿlām al-nisā'*, 2: 295.
6. Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 3: 239; Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 4: 185; Tihrānī, *al-Nābis*, 183.
7. Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamā'*, 3: 182; Amīn, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 7: 128; Jalālī, *Dirāsat*[um] *ḥawla Nahj al-balāgha*, 84-85.
8. Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 1: 12; Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamā'*, 5: 122; Ḥur al-ʿĀmilī, *Amal al-āmil*, 2: 284.

473/1081),[1] (7) Shaykh al-Ṭā'ifa Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067),[2] (8) Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Qudāma (d. 486/1094), and (9) Abū Zayd al-Kiyābākī.[3]

Transmission Permissions of *Nahj al-balāgha*[4]

In some of the extant transmission permissions or authorizations (*ijāzas*) from Shiite scholars, it is evident that transmission authorizers (*mashāyikh al-ijāzāt*) granted their students permission to narrate or transmit *Nahj al-balāgha*, explicitly tracing their chain of transmission back to al-Sharīf al-Raḍī. This serves as further evidence affirming the authenticity of the attribution of *Nahj al-balāgha* to al-Sharīf al-Raḍī.

Among the scholars who granted their students permission to transmit *Nahj al-balāgha* are the following: (1) Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad al-Rāzī, who authorized al-Bayhaqī to transmit *Nahj al-balāgha*; (2) Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Aḥmad b. Bandār, from whom Abū ʿAbd Allāh Ḥusayn transmitted *Nahj al-balāgha*; (3) ʿAlī b. Faḍl Allāh al-Ḥusaynī, who granted authorization to ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Mutaṭabbib in 589/1193; (4) Najīb al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Aḥmad al-Ḥillī, from whom Sayyid ʿIzz al-Dīn Ḥasan b. ʿAlī, known as Ibn Abraz, received permission in 741/1341; (5) al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī, who wrote a commentary on *Nahj al-balāgha* and issued a permission for its transmission in 723/1123; (6) Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ḥillī, from whom Ibn Maẓāhir transmitted *Nahj al-balāgha* in 741/1341; (7) Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn b. Abī l-Riḍā al-ʿAlawī, from whom Jamāl al-Dīn b. Abī l-Maʿālī narrated *Nahj al-balāgha* in 730/1330; (8) al-Shahīd al-Awwal Muḥammad b. Makkī, from whom Ibn Najda transmitted *Nahj al-balāgha* in 770/1369; (9) ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Bayāḍī, author of *al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm*, from whom Nāṣir b. Ibrāhīm al-Aḥsāwī transmitted *Nahj al-balāgha* in 852/1449; (10) al-Muḥaqqiq al-Thānī Shaykh ʿAlī al-Karakī, who issued a permission for Mullā Ḥusayn al-Astarābādī and Shaykh Ibrāhīm in 907/1502; (11) al-Shahīd al-Thānī Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī, who in 941/1535 issued a transmission authorization for al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-ʿĀmilī, the father of al-Shaykh al-Bahā'ī; (12) Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī, who in 1062/1652 granted a permission to his son, ʿAllāma Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, along with numerous other authorizations issued by scholars and teachers from the time of *Nahj al-balāgha*'s compilation to the present day.

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1. Muntajab al-Dīn, *al-Fihrist*, 37; Ibn Sharāshūb, *Maʿālim al-ʿulamā'*, 27; Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 2: 484.
2. Shaykh Ṭūsī's narration from al-Sharīf al-Raḍī without an intermediary is doubtful.
3. Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamā'*, 3: 229; Tihrānī, *al-Nābis*, 108; Jalālī, *Dirāsat*[*in*] *ḥawla Nahj al-balāgha*, 89-92.
4. See Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol 107-110; Jalālī, *Dirāsat*[*in*] *ḥawla Nahj al-balāgha*, 95-117; ʿUṭāridī, *Ijāzāt*.

2. Chains of Transmission, Sources, and Supplements of *Nahj al-balāgha*

One challenge regarding the validity of *Nahj al-balāgha* is that the absence of chains of transmission (*asnād*) for the sermons and letters compiled by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī leads to doubts and questions concerning the book's authenticity, its sources, and its reliability.

In response to this challenge, it should be noted that *Nahj al-balāgha* consists of a selection of sermons, letters, and short sayings of ʿAlī (a), which al-Sharīf al-Raḍī extracted from earlier works. His objective was to compile the most eloquent statements of the Imam to benefit orators and scholars in the field of rhetoric, rather than to compose a hadith collection focused on jurisprudential or historical issues that would necessitate citing chains of transmission and sources. Moreover, since the references used in *Nahj al-balāgha* were well-known and widely available at the time, al-Sharīf al-Raḍī did not find it necessary to mention them explicitly. However, in later centuries, as some of those sources were lost, later scholars increasingly felt the need for documentations and chains of transmission.

Furthermore, *Nahj al-balāgha* was neither the first nor the last book to compile the words of ʿAlī (a). Prior to its compilation, early collections already existed that preserved his speeches, letters, and sayings, from which al-Sharīf al-Raḍī selected excerpts for his work. After *Nahj al-balāgha*, dozens of independent books were written on the statements of Imam ʿAlī, the Commander of the Faithful (a), with content similar to what is found in *Nahj al-balāgha*. The presence of many sermons, letters, and aphorisms from *Nahj al-balāgha* in sources that are accepted and trusted even by opponents serves as a compelling argument against those who question the book's authenticity.

Researchers in the field of *Nahj al-balāgha* have responded to this question through valuable scholarly efforts, identifying and demonstrating the sources of the book. This section is organized into four parts: the words of ʿAlī before *Nahj al-balāgha*, the sources used by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī in *Nahj al-balāgha*, the chains of transmission and sources of *Nahj al-balāgha*, and the supplements to *Nahj al-balāgha*.

A) ʿAlī's Words Before *Nahj al-balāgha*

It is evident that ʿAlī was among the most eloquent orators of the first/7th century, and his sermons became the pinnacle of oratory both in his time and in later generations. His eloquent and captivating words were transmitted orally for decades and even centuries. Many individuals memorized his sayings and passed them on to future generations, while others recorded and documented his words in writing.

Al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 292/905) writes: "Four hundred sermons from ʿAlī (a) have been preserved, and these are the ones that are commonly used by the people in their speeches and sermons."[1] This is while *Nahj al-balāgha* contains approximately 240 sermons from him. Al-Masʿūdī (d. 346/956) states: "Four hundred and eighty sermons from ʿAlī have been recorded."[2] Al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī ibn Shuʿba al-Ḥaraānī, a scholar of the fourth/11th century, writes in his esteemed work *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*: "If we were to compile only the sermons of ʿAlī on monotheism (*tawḥīd*), they would amount to the length of this entire book."[3]

Many scholars compiled the words of Imam ʿAlī before al-Sayyid al-Raḍī. They gathered precious collections of his statements, some of which remained available in Baghdad until the time of al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Najāshī. Unfortunately, these works were lost when Ṭughril the Seljuq entered Baghdad. Azizollah ʿUṭāridī (d. 2014) identified seventy scholars who compiled the words of Imam ʿAlī (a) and listed their works in his research.[4]

B) The Sources Cited in *Nahj al-balāgha*

During the many years he spent collecting *Nahj al-balāgha* and searching for the words of ʿAlī (a), al-Sayyid al-Raḍī undoubtedly relied on numerous sources, though he did not find it necessary to mention all of them. Nevertheless, he did cite sources or chains of transmission for several sermons, letters, and aphorisms. The referenced sources in *Nahj al-balāgha* are as follows:

(1) *Al-Maghāzī* by Saʿīd b. Yaḥyā b. Abān al-Umawī (d. 194/809-10), (2) *al-Jumal* by Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823), (3) *al-Bayān wa l-tabyīn* by Abū ʿUthmān ʿAmr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868), (4) *al-Maqāmāt* by Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Iskāfī (d. 240/854-55), (5) *al-Muqtaḍab* by Abū l-ʿAbbās Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898), (6) *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk* by Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), (7) *Gharīb al-ḥadīth* by Abū ʿUbayd Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838), (8) *Ḥikāya Thaʿlab al-Shaybānī* (d. 291/903-4) by Ibn Aʿrābī (d. 231/845-46), (9) *Ḥilf Rabīʿa wa-Yaman* as recorded by Abū l-Mundhir Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī (d. 204/819), (10) a narration from Ḍirār b. Ḥamza (or Ḍumra) al-Ḍibāʾī, a companion of ʿAlī (a), (11) a narration from Nawf al-Bikālī al-Ḥimyarī (d. 90–100/708-18), a companion of the Imam,

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Mushākila*, 12, 48.
2. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2: 417.
3. Ibn Shuʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 61.
4. See ʿUṭāridī, "Kalāmu ʿAlī (a) mā qabla Nahj al-balāgha"; Munzawī, *Fihrist*, 2: 299-305.

(12) a narration from Abū Juḥayfa Wahb b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Sawānī (d. 75/694-95), a companion of Imam ʿAlī (a), reports from Kumayl b. Ziyād al-Nakhaʿī (d. 82/701-2), a close associate of the Imam (a), (13) a narration from Dhaʿlab al-Yamānī, (14) a narration from Imam al-Bāqir (d. 114/733), (15) a narration from Masʿada b. Ṣadaqa, a contemporary of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) and the author of *Khuṭab Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī* (Sermons of the Commander of the Faithful ʿAlī), and finally, (16) Dhaʿlab al-Yāmī's narration from Aḥmad b. Qutayba, from ʿAbd Allāh b. Yazīd, from Mālik b. Diḥya, from Imam ʿAlī (a).

C) Chains of Transmission and Sources of *Nahj al-balāgha*

Had al-Sayyid al-Raḍī followed the method of compilation employed by al-Kulaynī in his esteemed work *Uṣūl al-kāfī* for documenting sources and chains of transmission, and had he utilized the vast array of sources available in his time to record the chains and transmitters of Imam ʿAlī's statements, *Nahj al-balāgha* would have entered Shiite legal circles centuries earlier and played a significant role in political and governance-related matters.

Some researchers and scholars, through extensive study and invaluable efforts, have traced the sources, chains of transmission, transmitters, and hadith narrators of ʿAlī's words in *Nahj al-balāgha* from among dozens of earlier books and references, producing several works on its chains of transmission and sources. In doing so, they have dispelled all doubts, silenced malicious skepticism, and firmly asserted the authenticity and integrity of this unparalleled book. Some commentators of *Nahj al-balāgha* have referenced certain sources and chains of transmission of the Imam's words within their exegeses, including notable figures such as Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd al-Muʿtazilī, Ḥabīb Allāh Hāshimī Khū'ī (d. 1324/1907), and ʿAllāma Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1110/1699) in *Biḥār al-anwār*.

A number of scholars have dedicated independent works to this subject, including the following: (1) *Madārik Nahj al-balāgha wa-dafʿ al-shubuhāt ʿanhu* by Shaykh Hādī Kāshif al-Ghiṭā' (d. 1929),[1] (2) *Istinād Nahj al-balāgha* by Imtiyāz ʿAlī Khān ʿArshī (d. 1981),[2] (3) *Maṣādir Nahj al-balāgha fī madārik Nahj al-balāgha* by Sayyid Hibat al-Dīn al-Shahrastānī (d. 1967),[3] (4) *Pazhūhishī dar asnād wa madārik-i Nahj al-balāgha* by Seyed Mohammad Mahdi Jafari, (5) *Baḥthī kūtāh pirāmūn-i madārik-i Nahj al-balāgha* by Reza

1. This book has been published in Beirut as an appendix to *Mustadrak Nahj al-balāgha*.
2. The book was written in English and, despite its brevity, is a highly valuable and beneficial work in its field. It has been translated into Arabic by ʿĀmir al-Anṣārī Hanī and into Persian by Dr. Seyed Morteza Ayatollahzadeh Shirazi.
3. This book has not been published yet.

Ostadi, (6) *Maṣādir Nahj al-balāgha* by ʿAbd Allāh Niʿma, (7) *Asnād wa madārik-i Nahj al-balāgha* and (8) *Ruwāt wa muḥaddithīn-i Nahj al-balāgha*, both by Mohammad Dashti (d. 2001), (9) *Barrasi-yi asnād wa madārik-i Nahj al-balāgha* by Seyed Javad Mostafavi, and (10) *Maṣādir Nahj al-balāgha wa-asānīdih* by Sayyid ʿAbd al-Zahrā al-Ḥusaynī al-Khaṭīb.[1]

D) Supplements of *Nahj al-balāgha*

The first person who intended to compile a supplement and addendum to *Nahj al-balāgha* was none other than al-Sharīf al-Raḍī himself. Anticipating that some of Imam ʿAlī's words might not have reached him, he left certain pages of his manuscript blank so that any additional sayings of the Imam that he might later come across could be selected and incorporated into *Nahj al-balāgha*.

After al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, a number of scholars sought to collect the sermons and letters of Imam ʿAlī (a) that appear in various sources but were not included in *Nahj al-balāgha*, compiling supplements and addenda to it. Of the early works in this field, only their names remain in historical references, while some of the more recent compilations are of significant value.

Notable among them are: (1) *al-Tadhyīl ʿalā Nahj al-balāgha* by ʿAbd Allāh b. Ismāʿīl al-Ḥalabī, (2) *Mulḥaq Nahj al-balāgha* by Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Nāqa,[2] (3) *al-Nahj al-qawīm fī kalām Amīr al-Muʾminīn* by Sayyid Khalaf b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib al-Mushaʿsha'ī al-Ḥuwayzī (d. 1074/1663-64), (4) *Mustadrak Nahj al-balāgha* by Shaykh Hādī Kāshif al-Ghiṭāʾ, (5) *Nahj al-faṣāḥa* by Seyed Kazem Kefaee, (6) *Miṣbāḥ al-balāgha fī mishkāt al-ṣiyāgha* by Sayyid Ḥasan Mīrjahānī Ṭabāṭabāʾī, (7) *Nahj al-balāgha al-thānī* by Sheikh Jafar Haeri, (8) *Nahj al-saʿāda fī mustadrak Nahj al-balāgha* by Mohammad Bagher Mahmoudi, and (9) *Tamām Nahj al-balāgha* by Sayyid Ṣādiq Mūsawī.

In addition to the aforementioned examples, some scholarly scribes have appended sermons and letters of Imam ʿAlī that were absent from *Nahj al-balāgha* to the end of their own manuscript copies.[3]

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1. In addition to these works, two other books dedicated to the commentary or supplementation of *Nahj al-balāgha* have also included extensive discussions on its sources. Among them are *Minhāj al-barāʿa fī sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha* by Hassan Hassanzadeh Amoli and *Nahj al-saʿāda fī mustadrak Nahj al-balāgha* by the late Mohammad Bagher Mahmoudi (d. 2006).

2. A manuscript of this book, cataloged under number 1860, is preserved in the library of Astan Quds Razavi (Mashhad, Iran).

3. Regarding the supplements and addenda of *Nahj al-balāgha*, see Dilshād Tihrānī, *Chashma-yi khurshīd*, 385-87.

3. Characteristics of *Nahj al-balāgha*

Nahj al-balāgha is the spiritual emanation of the soul of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ʿAlī (a). Thus, like his multifaceted and astonishing personality, it is remarkable and unparalleled in many respects, and highly sublime. The words and phrases, the structure and composition, the strength and precision, the rhythm and musicality, the delicacy and enchantment of its expression and meanings—these elements imbue this book with such allure, beauty, and depth that every literary connoisseur and person of refined taste is left captivated and astounded. What great writer or orator can compose a sermon like the sermons of ʿAlī (a), delivered extemporaneously, even with unlimited time at their disposal? What mystic or divine philosopher possesses the ability to articulate wisdom as he did? What ruler or social leader can match his discourse in politics and governance? What military commander or general can, like him, elevate the spirit of valor to its peak with a stirring sermon and utter words as steadfast and commanding in the art of warfare?

The most distinctive feature of *Nahj al-balāgha*, which sets it apart from other books and grants it a unique and prominent status in Islamic culture and literature, is its exquisite phrasing, verbal ornamentation, and its spirited, and epic tone. When its lofty and enduring concepts are adorned with the art of eloquence and rhetoric—brought to life through literary and semantic craftsmanship, especially the balanced cadence and musicality of its prose—they captivate the listener's soul, drawing the enraptured spirit along, word by word, in its mesmerizing flow.

Beyond its eloquence, rhetorical brilliance, and artistic beauty, the profound meanings and lofty concepts of *Nahj al-balāgha* have granted this unparalleled book an enduring legacy throughout history. These deep and timeless ideas, intertwined with human nature, draw from the fountain of divine revelation and, like a cascading stream of ʿAlī's words, have flowed through the course of time, nourishing the vast expanse of human life.

Nahj al-balāgha is a guide to living, thinking, and worship. It is a book of asceticism and love, of battle and devotion, of wisdom and philosophy. It is a book of politics and governance, as well as a manual for attaining both worldly success and eternal salvation.

Some of the most captivating qualities and distinguishing features of Imam ʿAlī's words in *Nahj al-balāgha* include the following: a mastery of rhetoric and the allure of eloquence; a comprehensive range of guidance addressing both individual and societal needs; the inclusion of sublime insights pertaining to theoretical and practical wisdom; providing essential guidance in practical wisdom; encompassing the principles and

regulations of political science; presenting strong and compelling arguments; vividly illustrating concepts through the art of expression; laying out the foundations of governance; cultivation of thought and intellect; conveying profound and valuable theoretical and ethical meanings; strengthening the spirit of courage and nobility; upholding directness in speech and honesty in addressing historical events and analyzing political transformations; fostering a sense of commitment and responsibility; speaking in harmony with human innate nature; deeply resonating with the soul; diagnosing societal ailments while offering remedies and paths to well-being; combating ignorance and its consequences; supporting the oppressed and mobilizing the impoverished; reliance on truth; his words emerging from the lived realities of the Islamic society; advocating for the rule of law while rejecting disorder and lawlessness; emphasizing fundamental human values; respecting public opinion; upholding the significance of choice and freedom; recognizing the rights of others; upholding justice in every dimension of life; a forward-looking vision; doctrinal, theological, philosophical, historical, exegetical, and Quranic discussions, along with countless other invaluable insights, inviting scholars and seekers of knowledge across the ages to continually draw from its ever-flowing fountain.[1]

These qualities have made *Nahj al-balāgha* an unparalleled encyclopedia, vividly presenting ʿAlī's words and deeds before the eyes of the world in all their beauty. It is a comprehensive book, whose guidance transforms both soul and society, healing even the most incurable afflictions—just as the magnetic power of ʿAlī's speech lifted Hammām's spirit from the realm of matter to the heights of the celestial world. For indeed, "This is what strong counsel does to people who listen!"[2]

Several factors have come together to make *Nahj al-balāgha* an enduring and timeless work, standing across the ages as a captivating and inspiring text in the realm of thought. Here, we highlight some of these key elements.

1. The remarkable and exalted personality of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ʿAlī (a), is the foremost reason for the timelessness of *Nahj al-balāgha*. The depth and universality of his virtues are reflected in his words, captivating hearts to the extent that every seeker of perfection follows him, every advocate of justice is devoted to him, and every free soul is enamored by him. After the Messenger of God (s), he is the fountainhead of all beauty, the foremost among the virtuous, and the unrivaled champion in the fields of excellence and virtue. It is for this reason that his speech

1. See Dashtī, *ShināKht-i Nahj al-balāgha*, 144-51.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 193.

remains unparalleled in eloquence and expression. ʿAlī's words are but a reflection of his singular essence and a manifestation of his vast knowledge. Just as speech and writing reflect the soul and reveal one's inner awareness, *Nahj al-balāgha* is a luminous expression of a sacred spirit whose awareness of the truths of existence was so profound that, in his own words, "I know more about the pathways of the heavens than I do about the pathways of the earth!" His declaration—"Ask me before I am lost to you"[1]—revealed his unmatched ability to resolve every question and unravel every complexity. *Nahj al-balāgha* is without parallel, and ʿAlī is even more so.

2. The eloquence and rhetorical brilliance[2] of Imam ʿAlī's words are among the most significant factors behind the enduring appeal of *Nahj al-balāgha*, placing it, by the admission of literary scholars and orators, second only to the Quran. The art of oration has long been a distinguished human skill, and all divine prophets have relied on its power to convey their messages. The emphasis placed by the All-Wise God in the Quran on literary embellishments such as *sajʿ* (rhymed prose), *jināS* (paronomasia), and *ṭibāq* (antithesis), alongside expressive techniques like *tashbīh* (simile), *istiʿāra* (metaphor), and *kināya* (metanomy or allusion), serves as undeniable proof of the necessity for religious leaders to employ these methods. This stylistic quality of the divine word is so profound and distinctive that it stands as one of the most evident aspects of the Quran's miraculous nature.

The impact of eloquent speech on its audience is that mysterious force often referred to as the "magic of expression" and the "alchemy of words." When the art of oration is combined with spirituality, devotion to God, and the pursuit of justice, its effect becomes even more profound.

Imam ʿAlī, the Master of the Pious (a), the sovereign of eloquence, and the commander of speech, employs literary devices and rhetorical techniques—such as metaphor, simile, allegory, and allusion—to convey profound truths, deep wisdom, and pure knowledge in stirring and evocative forms. Seldom does one find a sentence or phrase in his speech that is not adorned with rhythm and balance. The harmony of words not only enhances their beauty but also provides a structured and fitting form that delights the listener, aids comprehension and memorization, reduces fatigue and monotony, and prepares the audience to embrace the meanings conveyed. The

1. Ibid., sermon 93, 189.

2. Numerous treatises and articles have been written on the eloquence and rhetorical mastery of the words of the Imam ʿAlī and Nahj al-balāgha. For instance, see e.g., Khāqānī, *Balāghat dar Nahj al-balāgha*; Makārim-shīrāzī, *Faṣāḥat wa Balāghat dar Nahj al-balāgha*; Dilshād Tihrānī, "ṣanāyiʿ-i adabī dar Nahj al-balāgha."

technique of paronomasia, in which words share phonetic similarity while differing in meaning, appears in multiple forms throughout *Nahj al-balāgha*, further enriching its rhetorical splendor.

The prose of *Nahj al-balāgha* exemplifies the art of "simple yet inimitable" (*al-sahl al-mumtani*ʿ). It seamlessly blends euphonic words, refined rhetorical devices, and intricate eloquence while maintaining a perfect balance between diction and meaning, always suited to the context. In covenants, wills, and certain sermons where circumlocution (*iṭnāb*) is necessary, the discourse extends to the required length with precision and purpose. Conversely, in instances such as brief words of wisdom or aphorisms, where brevity is essential, the language is concise yet profound, laden with depth and significance.

The text of *Nahj al-balāgha*, a blend of simple, unembellished (*mursal*) and rhythmic prose, is expressed in a style so solid, captivating, elegant, and natural that some of its passages, in terms of fluency, smoothness, and the melodious cadence of the language, resemble poetic prose.

The precise and artful use of Quranic verses, Prophetic hadiths, poetry from Imam ʿAlī himself, as well as poets such as Aʿshā, Imruʾ al-Qays, Durayd b. al-Ṣimma, Abū Dhuwayb, and Ḥātim b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ṭāʾī; the use of allegories and well-suited proverbs;[1] the employment of eloquent similes, metaphors, and allusions more expressive than explicit statements—these are among the literary features of this book of guidance and eloquence.

Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, the renowned Arab litterateur, poet, and historian, writes in his commentary on *Nahj al-balāgha*: "Behold eloquence, how it has surrendered its reins to this man [ʿAlī (a)] and placed its bridle in his hands. Observe the astonishing harmony of words, flowing one after another at his command—like a spring that gushes forth effortlessly from the earth..."[2]

According to al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha* opens the gates of eloquence and the beauty of thought to its readers, preparing them to appreciate both its verbal and semantic subtleties.[3] The sublime sermons, insightful letters, and eloquent maxims of Imam ʿAlī (a) have, throughout Islamic history—both before and after the compilation

1. For research on the use of proverbs in Nahj al-balāgha, see Gharawī, *al-Amthāl al-mustakhraja min Nahj al-balāgha*; Faḍlī, *al-Amthāl min Nahj al-balāgha*.

2. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 16: 145.

3. Muḥaqqiq al-Tustarī has compiled examples of expressions from *Nahj al-balāgha* that embody literary excellence, along with the perspectives of scholars who have described their eloquence (Tustarī, *Bahj al-ṣabāgha*, 1: 17-19).

of *Nahj al-balāgha*—served as a source of inspiration for Muslim literati across various languages and nations, particularly Arab and Persian poets and writers. Like the Noble Quran, it has left a profound and enduring impact on the literary traditions of both languages.

Renowned poets such as Abū Nuwās, Abū Tammām al-Ṭāʾī, Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī, Abū l-Fatḥ al-Bustī, and Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd al-Muʿtazilī in the realm of Arabic literature, as well as towering figures like Ferdowsī, Nāṣir Khusraw, Rūmī, and Saʿdī in Persian language and literature, are among those who have drawn from the wellspring of Imam ʿAlī's eloquence and guidance. They have borrowed numerous themes from his speeches and writings, adorning their own poetic and prose works with his wisdom.[1]

3. The diversity of themes and the comprehensiveness of its expressions are among the key factors that contribute to the value and timelessness of *Nahj al-balāgha*. It does not feel like merely a political, ethical, theological, or historical work; rather, Imam ʿAlī's words traverse all these domains, offering his audience priceless gems drawn from the very depths of each field.

The enlightening and life-giving teachings of Imam ʿAlī's school possess a unique comprehensiveness and manifest in novel and diverse expressions. The thematic richness of *Nahj al-balāgha* has inspired renowned poets and orators to draw upon its instructive content to enrich their own works. Throughout the centuries, this book has captivated not only poets and orators but also countless scholars, including jurists, theologians, exegetes, philosophers, sociologists, ethicists, and other intellectuals—each of whom, in their own way, has expressed admiration and praise in its honor.

Nahj al-balāgha is a unique work that, due to its inclusion of diverse subjects such as theology, religious belief, ethics, wisdom, human nature, and life directives, rightfully deserves to be called *Nahj al-Ḥayāt* (The Path to Living), *Nahj al-Hidāya* (The Path of Guidance), *Nahj al-Tarbiyya* (The Path of Education), *Nahj al-Falāḥ* (The Path of Felicity), and *Nahj al-Saʿāda* (The Path of Happiness). This is because the book guarantees the prosperity of both this world and the hereafter for those who grasp its mysteries and the essence of its truths and adhere to its wise and constructive guidance.

4. *Nahj al-balāgha* reflects the brief rule of a divine man who faced internal crises and various social factions, including the Unjust (*Qāsiṭūn*), Extremists (*Māriqūn*), and Oath-Breakers (*Nākithūn*), yet emerged with honor in fulfilling the mission of governance.

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1. On the impact of *Nahj al-balāgha* on Arabic and Persian literature, see Amīnī, "Nahj al-balāgha wa atharuhu ʿalā al-Adab al-ʿarabī"; Dashtī, *Maʿārif Nahj al-balāgha*; Mīrzā-muḥammad, *Dar bārgāh-i āftāb: Nahj al-balāgha dar Adab-i pārsī*.

5. *Nahj al-balāgha* reflects the political transformations of society after the Age of Ignorance (*Jāhiliyya*), particularly following the Prophet's demise.

6. This book illustrates the diverse dispositions of people and, in other words, contains a form of social psychology.

7. In every domain it addresses, this book presents the highest peaks: in depicting the lives of the devout and pious, it features the Sermon of Hammām and al-Qāṣiʿa; in governance and statecraft, it includes the Covenant of Mālik al-Ashtar; in life counsel and social and personal conduct, it offers Imam ʿAlī's letter to Imam his son al-Ḥasan; and in describing the Almighty and the wonders of creation, its first sermon leaves all in awe.

Nahj al-balāgha from the Perspectives of Distinguished Figures[1]

For a deeper understanding of the characteristics and various dimensions of *Nahj al-balāgha*, reflecting on the perspectives of scholars who, with diverse specialties and interests, have engaged with this book—discovering in it the loftiest thoughts and the most elevated ideas in their respective fields—and have expressed admiration and praise for it, serves as a valuable guide.

Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, driven by his mystical outlook and profound literary taste, became captivated by the eloquent and articulate words of Imam ʿAlī (a) and dedicated himself to compiling his sermons and sayings. Since then, for centuries, scholars, literati, philosophers, mystics, and social reformers have continually engaged with *Nahj al-balāgha*. They have drawn from this comprehensive work valuable scientific insights, brilliant literary passages, divine doctrines, theological truths, the proper principles of governance, and Islamic political thought, regarding it as the best guide for humanity's attainment of worldly and eternal felicity. Several Shiite and Sunni scholars, as well as Orientalists, have expressed profound admiration for *Nahj al-balāgha* in both prose and poetry. Here, we present a selection of their remarks.

Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Bayhaqī (d. 565/1169), the author of a commentary on *Nahj al-balāgha*, writes: "This precious book is filled with words that purify the listener and refine the speaker. It contains the finest expressions and the firmest meanings—its speech is

1. The late Sayyid ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī, in his series of articles on *Nahj al-balāgha*, dedicated one article to the words of scholars regarding this book. In this article, he compiled 29 poetic excerpts and 22 prose passages in praise of *Nahj al-balāgha* (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, "fī riḥāb Nahj al-balāgha (4)," 87-99). Similarly, al-Ḥusaynī al-Khaṭīb has gathered a collection of statements by intellectuals on the subject (Ḥusaynī al-Khaṭīb, *Maṣādir Nahj al-balāgha*, 88-106). Moreover, Mohammad Mahdi Ali-Gholi has presented the views of Shiite, Sunni, and Christian scholars on *Nahj al-balāgha* (ʿAlī-qulī, *Sīmā-yi Nahj al-balāgha*, 88-106). The content of this section is drawn from the aforementioned sources as well as others.

more melodious than the tunes of musicians and more stirring than the delights of paradise ... It [i.e. *Nahj al-balāgha*] is a word that, when the eyes fall upon it, unveils the hidden truths of knowledge, and when it passes through the mind, grants the fruits of concealed mysteries."[1]

Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī, in his commentary on *Nahj al-balāgha*, states: "The words of ʿAlī (a), in the view of discerning and intelligent people, rank below the words of God and His Messenger but above the words of human beings."[2] Similarly, Quṭb al-Dīn al-Kaydarī, who authored *Ḥadā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq fī fasr daqā'iq afṣaḥ al-khalā'iq* in the sixth/13th century, writes: "By my life, it is a book unparalleled in excellence and virtue ... It encompasses the fountains of knowledge and, among books, shines like the full moon among the stars. Its words are lofty and sublime, its meanings sacred and prophetic—without equal or counterpart."[3]

Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd al-Muʿtazilī, the renowned Arab historian, poet, and commentator on *Nahj al-balāgha*, states: "Imam ʿAlī is the leader of orators and the foremost of eloquent speakers. His speech has rightly been regarded as beneath the words of the Creator yet above the words of creation. All masters of rhetoric and writers have learned the art of eloquence and composition from him."[4]

Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā (d. 709/1309), in his book *al-Fakhrī*, writes: "*Nahj al-balāgha* is a book that imparts wisdom, admonitions, sermons, divine unity, courage, asceticism, and lofty aspirations—wherein the least of its merits is eloquence and rhetorical excellence."[5]

Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbduh, after becoming acquainted with *Nahj al-balāgha*, was captivated by the words of the Imam and composed a commentary on it. In the introduction to his commentary, he writes: "The speech of ʿAlī, after the Quran and Prophetic statements, is the most noble, eloquent, and comprehensive of words ... *Nahj al-balāgha*, with the themes it encompasses, can fulfill the objectives of any writer or speaker ... It has never addressed a lofty purpose without rendering it in the most complete and perfect manner, nor has it ever articulated a profound thought without expressing it with unparalleled power in eloquent phrases."

Professor Henry Corbin writes: "*Nahj al-balāgha*, after the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet, holds the highest degree of importance—not only for the religious life of

1. See Bayhaqī, *Maʿārij*, 3, 99.
2. Rāwandī, *Minhāj al-barāʿa*, 1: 4.
3. Kaydarī al-Bayhaqī, *Ḥadā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq*, 1: 86.
4. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 42.
5. Ibn al-Ṭaqṭaqī, *al-Fakhrī*, 2.

Shiism but also for Shiite philosophical thought … The influence of this book is felt in multiple aspects: the structuring of logical reasoning in theology, the method of sound and principled inference, and the innovation of technical terms in Arabic, which have enriched both literary and philosophical language with remarkable beauty and depth… Shiite philosophy has derived its unique composition and form from this source, as Shiite thinkers, recognizing that the words of the Imam constitute a complete system of philosophy, have drawn from this book all the necessary knowledge in theology."

4. The Subject and Content of *Nahj al-balāgha*

Nahj al-balāgha is Imam ʿAlī's encyclopedia characterized by its remarkable comprehensiveness and diversity. It encompasses a range of subjects such as theology, the creation of the universe, the mission of the prophets, imamate and succession, governance and leadership, Quranic teachings, worship, piety, the foundations of Islamic ethics and education, religious rulings and punishments, individual and societal rights, sociology, public engagement, descriptions of nature's beauty, the traits of believers, the qualities of the perfect human, the dispositions of hypocrites and disbelievers, significant events of early Islam, the identification of Oath-Breakers (*Nakithūn*), Extremists (*Mariqūn*), and the Unjust (*Qāsiṭūn*), war and peace, death and resurrection, paradise and hell, and various other matters upon which human prosperity or wretchedness depends.

A journey through *Nahj al-balāgha* unveils Imam ʿAlī's comprehensive perspective on God, humanity, the cosmos, and the beginning and end of existence. It presents a living, perceptive, and articulate nature; a purposeful life; and a death that serves as a passageway to the astonishing and unknown realms of the *Barzakh* (the intermediate realm) and the Resurrection. It speaks of a paradise as the reward for the righteous and a hell as the retribution for the wicked; of nearness to God and divine satisfaction as the ultimate recompense for the patient and the pious; of a love that draws the servant to worship; of piety that cloaks one in protection from sin; of remembrance that shields against heedlessness; of devotion as the fruit of knowledge; of justice as the foundation of governance; of jihad as a gateway to paradise; of martyrdom as the noblest death; of a silence laden with meaning and bitterness, and of a resounding cry that shatters oppression. This book contains a discourse on every theme, a remedy for every ailment, and an answer to every need. It is a radiant image of the sun of truth—the sun that is the very essence of the master of the pious and the free-spirited of the world, Imam ʿAlī (a).[1]

1. Razmjū, *Darīchaʾī gushda bar āftāb*, 53-55.

In *Nahj al-balāgha*, the noble virtues, moral excellences, and commendable traits essential to the character of the perfect human being are expounded, including patience, chivalry, courage, loyalty, steadfastness, trustworthiness, humility, foresight, moderation, consultation in affairs, remembrance of death, and drawing lessons from the conditions of past generations.

Regarding the content of *Nahj al-balāgha*, Seyed Jafar Shahidi writes:

"*Nahj al-balāgha* is an encyclopedic repository of Islamic culture: theology, the realm of angels, the genesis of the universe, human nature, nations, and righteous or tyrannical governments. However, the key point is that throughout these discourses, the Imam's intent is not to teach the natural sciences or zoology, nor to convey philosophical or historical insights. ʿAlī's words, in presenting such discussions, resemble the approach of the Noble Quran, which, in the language of exhortation, places before the listener a clear and comprehensible example drawn from either the sensible or the intelligible world. Gradually, it then guides them toward the destination they are meant to reach: the threshold of God and the presence of the One Lord.

Where the discourse turns to the creation of the heavens and the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, and the mountains, it offers admonition, teaching that all that the Creator has bestowed is pure good. Yet, the ungrateful human fails to honor these countless blessings, turning away from God's path toward that of Satan, squandering divine gifts to stir evil and kindle strife. And where the tales of past generations are recalled, it instructs the present that time is a mirror of reflection in which one can see the past. But who is it that takes heed? Look upon the nations that have perished and now lie beneath the earth—what did they do, and what did they witness? Emulate their righteous deeds, and beware of the transgressions that led to their destruction.

Amid these exhortations, he sometimes turns his gaze to his companions, contemplating their state and conduct. Suddenly, a mountain of sorrow and regret descends upon his heart—this happens when his truth-seeing eyes shift away from those seated before his pulpit and open to a more distant horizon: the days of Muhammad and his pure-hearted companions, who, with faith in God and the Resurrection, placed the victory of religion above their worldly gains. Then, once more, he turns to the gathering before him and sees that barely thirty years have passed since that time. What, then, has transpired in this brief span that hypocrites have taken the place of true believers? A people who, when the world smiled upon them, forgot God and disobeyed their Imam. Where are those who once proudly stretched their necks, boasting that they had offered martyrs in

> God's cause and longed for martyrdom themselves? Why have those now surrounding him come to prefer ease over laying down their lives for faith? And why does each one seek to shift this religious duty onto another's shoulders?
>
> He reflects on the equality and selflessness of the early Muslims—how they prioritized others over themselves and strove to keep themselves untainted by worldly wealth. So why, now, have these people become hoarders of wealth and worshippers of the material world? These examples, along with dozens of others, form the substance of the Imam's sermons."[1]

One of the methods employed in presenting the concepts of *Nahj al-balāgha*, particularly in the section "Selections from the Sermons of the Commander of the Faithful (a)" (*al-Mukhtār min Khuṭab Amīr al-Mu'minīn*), is categorizing the Imam's statements based on the time of their delivery and the context of their expression. In this approach, considering the content of the Imam's words alongside historical evidence and indications, the temporal context of each statement is determined. In fact, by linking these words together, history is reconstructed, and with the aid of each statement, the intent of the others becomes clearer.

Mohammad Bagher Mahmoudi, in his book *Nahj al-Sa'āda*, has employed this method and highlighted its benefits, stating: "The chain of the Imam's words is arranged in the order in which they occurred within the framework of time and the external world, allowing anyone to easily access his statements from any given period. *Nahj al-balāgha* thus takes the form of a biography of the Imam, drawn from his own words and expressions. This enables us to assess the accuracy of various accounts written about his life. Moreover, it provides a means to determine the authenticity of statements attributed to him or denied from his sacred being."[2]

One scholar categorizes the periods in which the Imam's sermons were delivered into three phases: before the caliphate and leadership, during the assumption of the caliphate, and the five-year period of governance. Each phase is then further divided into several sections, with the sermons delivered in each period enumerated accordingly.[3]

A contemporary scholar has also divided the life of the Imam into distinct phases, assigning to each stage a selection of sermons, letters, and sayings whose dates—whether precise or approximate—have been determined. First: during the lifetime of the Prophet (s)—no trace of which exists in *Nahj al-balāgha*. Second: the period following

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1. Shahīdī, *Muntakhabī az Nahj al-balāgha*, 67.
2. Maḥmūdī, *Nahj al-sa'āda*, 1: 15.
3. See Dashtī, *ShināKht-i Nahj al-balāgha*, 9-12.

the Prophet's passing until Abū Bakr's death (10–13/632-34)—from which only a few statements have survived. Third: the era of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's caliphate (13–23/634-44)—from which some accounts are extant. Fourth: the period of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān's caliphate (23–35/644-56)—from which numerous statements are found in *Nahj al-balāgha*. Fifth: the caliphate of Imam ʿAlī (Dhu l-Ḥijja 35–Ramadn 40/Jun-July 656-January 661)—which contains the majority of his sermons and letters. This final phase begins with the pledge of allegiance and the months Imam ʿAlī (a) spent in Medina before the Battle of Jamal, extending until the moment he was struck in Ramadan 40/January 661 and concluding with his final testament on his deathbed.[1]

One *Nahj al-balāgha* scholar considers the characteristics of ʿAlī's governance to be the most significant theme of the sermons and writes:

> "Since ninety-eight percent of the sermons were delivered during his rule, this theme encompasses nearly all of *Nahj al-balāgha* and holds great significance. Despite lasting only four years and nine months, his governance was an exemplary model of Islamic rule, embodying truth and justice, unparalleled in human history and among other rulers and governors. His rule had twelve characteristics as follows: (1) he always remained mindful of God, (2) he was elected with complete freedom and by the unanimous will of the people, (3) he attended to all societal matters, both major and minor, (4) he granted people freedom and never coerced them, (5) he was honest, forthright, and refrained from deceit, trickery, and conspiracy, (6) he led a simple life, living as humbly as the poorest members of society, (7) for him, governance was a means, not an end—his true goal was to uphold the word of truth and advance Islam, (8) he upheld justice at the highest level, (9) he maintained strict equality in distributing the public treasury, (10) he adhered to the Prophet's tradition, considering its observance the key to prosperity, (11) he never wasted time, dedicating every moment of his life to the welfare of the Muslim community, and (12) he fought solely for God's pleasure, never for expansionism, greed, colonialism, exploitation, or bloodshed. His battles, which occupied much of his reign, can be examined in this context."[2]

Letters are mostly directives for rulers on how to deal with different social classes, how to safeguard the public treasury, and how to ensure that expenditures align with the welfare and interests of society. Yet this is not the directive of a sovereign ruling over half the inhabited world of his time, addressed to his subordinates. Rather, it is the writing of

1. See Jaʿfarī, *Pajūhishī dar asnād wa madārik-i Nahj al-balāgha*, 169-91.
2. See Muṣṭafawī, *Prtuw-ī az Nahj al-balāgha*, 15-18.

a kind and elderly father, seasoned by the trials of life, teaching his young children how to face the challenges of the battlefield of life.[1]

The third section of *Nahj al-balāgha* is a shell brimming with pearls of lofty wisdom, flowing from the wellspring of Imam ʿAli's knowledge and insight. In his aphorisms or words of wisdom (*kalamāt qisār*), Imam ʿAli (a) persistently and emphatically presents fundamental opposing concepts: reason and folly, knowledge and ignorance, poverty and wealth, generosity and miserliness, friendship and enmity, humility and arrogance, and so forth. Beyond this, these sayings underscore the necessity of several virtues: offering and heeding advice, recognizing one's limits and avoiding transgression, mastering one's desires, safeguarding aspirations from being trampled, living with piety, simplicity, and courtesy, proper use of words, trusting in God, being content with divine decree, hoping for His forgiveness, and encouraging forgiveness even to one's enemies.[2] Despite their brevity and conciseness, Imam ʿAli's statements in this section encompass a world of meaning. Some of his aphorisms are so practical and illuminating that they have become proverbial.

The subjects covered in this profound book are so vast and diverse that they cannot be easily enumerated. Nevertheless, scholars of *Nahj al-balāgha* have made great efforts to extract and categorize the themes of this healing text to the best of their ability. Ayatollah Motahari (d. 1979) in his valuable work *A Journey Through Nahj al-balāgha* has classified its themes under the following broad categories: (1) theology and metaphysics, (2) spiritual conduct and worship, (3) governance and justice, (4) Ahl al-Bayt and the caliphate, (5) exhortation and wisdom, (6) the world and worldliness, (7) heroism and courage, (8) prophecies and esoteric matters, (9) supplications and prayers, (10) complaints and critiques of the people of the time, (11) social principles, (12) Islam and the Quran, (13) ethics and self-purification, (14) notable figures and a range of other discussions.[3]

Labīb Bayḍūn, the Syrian researcher, in his book *Tasnīf Nahj al-balāgha*, has categorized all the discussions of *Nahj al-balāgha* into nine broad sections, each containing chapters, and each chapter comprising various topics—amounting to a total of 49 chapters and 376 topics. The titles of these sections are as follows: (1) principles of religion, (2) ancillaries of religion (acts of worship and transactions), (3) imamate and the Imams, (4) the biography of Imam ʿAlī, (5) the battles of Imam ʿAlī during his

1. Shahīdī, *Muntakhabī az Nahj al-balāgha*, 7.
2. See De Fouchécour, *Akhlāqiyyāt*, 140-58.
3. See Muṭahharī, *Sayr-ī dar Nahj al-balāgha*, 30-31.

caliphate, (6) state governance, (7) social affairs, (8) humanity and human conditions, and (9) ethical exhortations and moral guidance.[1]

In the book *Al-Dalīl ʿalā mawḍūʿāt Nahj al-balāgha* (A guide to the themes of *Nahj al-balāgha*), the general themes of *Nahj al-balāgha* are divided into seven categories, each encompassing various subjects, amounting to a total of 132 topics. According to this book, the overarching themes of *Nahj al-balāgha* are as follows: (1) theology and cosmology, (2) prophethood, (3) beliefs and religious rulings, (4) imamate and caliphate, (5) history, (6) society, politics, and economy, and (7) ethics.[2]

Uways Karīm Muḥammad has classified the themes of *Nahj al-balāgha* into 22 sections, each containing chapters, and each chapter comprising various topics, amounting to a total of 604 subjects. The section titles are as follows: (1) reason and knowledge, (2) Islam, faith, certainty, disbelief, polytheism, and doubt, (3) the Quran and the Prophetic tradition, (4) the principles of religion, (5) acts of worship, (6) piety and the pious, (7) fear and hope, (8) repentance and the forgiveness of sins, (9) supplication and the prayers attributed to Imam ʿAlī, (10) asceticism, (11) exhortation and moral lessons, (12) enjoining good and forbidding evil, (13) jihad, warfare, and martyrdom, (14) the Islamic ruler and his characteristics, (15) economy in *Nahj al-balāgha*, (16) greater jihad or self-purification, (17) ethics, (18) family, relatives, women, child-rearing, and neighbors, (19) friendship and friends, (20) historical events and cases, (21) judgment and issuing legal opinions, and (22) miscellaneous topics.[3]

Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ (d. 1986) appended several indexes at the end of *Nahj al-balāgha*, including an alphabetical index of topics, under each of which the corresponding texts from *Nahj al-balāgha* are compiled; a thematic index for sermons and letters; and a categorized index covering doctrinal issues, religious rulings, philosophy, theology, and social matters.

In *Al-Hādī ilā mawḍūʿāt Nahj al-balāgha*, the subjects of the book have been extracted in alphabetical order, with the corresponding texts from *Nahj al-balāgha* provided under each entry. This work identifies approximately 625 key topics from *Nahj al-balāgha*.

ʿAllāma al-Tustarī (d. 1995), in *Bahj al-ṣabāgha*, divided the subjects of *Nahj al-balāgha* into 60 chapters, presenting various topics within each chapter. In this way, he has provided a thematic commentary on *Nahj al-balāgha*.[4]

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1. See Bayḍūn, *Taṣnīfu Nahj al-balāgha*, 9-26.
2. See Anṣāriyān, *al-Dalīl*, 9-15.
3. See Muḥammad, *al-Muʿjam al-mawḍūʿī li Nahj al-balāgha*, 464-500.
4. See Tustarī, *Bahj al-ṣabāgha*, 26-29.

Some scholars, in their thematic studies of *Nahj al-balāgha*, have followed the book's own structure, beginning with the sermons and identifying the various subjects found within each, then moving on to the letters, and finally analyzing the aphorisms or short sayings. Among those who have employed this method are Mohammad Dashti (d. 2001) in *Farhang-i mawḍūʿāt-i kullī-yi Nahj al-balāgha* and Mohammad Mahdi Jafari in *Partuwī az Nahj al-balāgha*.

Thematic Monographs and Specific Issues in *Nahj al-balāgha*

One of the common methods for explaining and presenting the concepts of *Nahj al-balāgha* is in the form of monographs that are independently written on a specific subject and one or more statements from the Imam. The following are some examples:

A) Doctrinal Principles and Mystical Issues

Among the fundamental and instructive sections of *Nahj al-balāgha* are issues related to theology and the supernatural realm. The discussions on monotheism or divine unity (*tawḥīd*) in *Nahj al-balāgha*, which are largely rational, argumentative, and philosophical, may be considered its most astonishing sections, deserving of deep reflection and contemplation. This book presents insightful and valuable discussions on the essence and attributes of God, from which the subtleties of monotheism, an Islamic worldview, and the doctrinal principles of Shiism can be derived. As Ayatollah Morteza Motahari stated: "*Nahj al-balāgha* has played a significant role in the history of Eastern philosophy. Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn, who revolutionized the concepts of divine philosophy, was profoundly influenced by the words of ʿAlī."[1]

B) Ancillaries of Religion in *Nahj al-balāgha*

Throughout the Imam's words, the virtues of devotional acts and the emphasis on their observance are frequently highlighted. Regarding prayer, he states: "Fear God! Fear God! Concerning prayer, for prayer is the pillar of your religion … Prayer is the means of nearness for every pious person." Concerning fasting, he says: "The fasting of the month

1. Muṭahharī, *Sayr-ī dar Nahj al-balāgha*, 76. It is worth mentioning that numerous books and articles have been written on this subject, some of which can be presented as follows: (1) *Al-ʿAqā'id min Nahj al-balāgha*, Muḥsin ʿAlī al-Muʿallim; (2) *Uṣūl dar partuw-i Nahj al-balāgha*, Mohammad Baqer Behboodi; (3) *Anwārī az Nahj al-balāgha*, Muḥammad Jaʿfar Imāmī; (4) *Khudā dar Nahj al-balāgha*, Mohammad Ali Gerami; (5) *Ilāhiyyāt dar Nahj al-balāgha*, Luṭf Allāh Ṣāfī Gulpāygānī; (6) *Daqā'iq al-Tawḥīd fī Nahj al-balāgha*, Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥakīm; (7) *Jahān-bīnī wa jahn-dārī-yi ʿAlī* (*a*), Sayyid Ibrāhīm Sayyid ʿAlawī; (8) *Ḥikmat-I ilāhī wa Nahj al-balāgha*, Mohammad Mofatteh; (9) *Ṣifāt-i jamāl wa jalāl-i Khudāwand dar Nahj al-balāgha*, Muhammad Husayn Mukhtari Mazandarani; (10) *Ṣifāt-i jamāl wa jalāl dar ʿIrfān wa Nahj al-balāgha*, Dhabīḥ Muṭahharīkhāh; (11) *Ḥikmat-i naẓarī wa ʿamalī dar Nahj al-balāgha*, Abdollah Javadi-Amoli.

of Ramadan is a protection from punishment and a shield against torment… Everything has a due alms, and the alms of the body is fasting." Regarding khums and zakat, he states: "Khums should be placed where it rightfully belongs… God has made zakat obligatory so that sustenance may increase… Moreover, zakat and prayer serve as a means of nearness to God for Muslims." He also considers hajj, like jihad, a source of strength for religion. The Imam's words on jihad, warfare, and martyrdom are extensive; for instance, he states: "Jihad is a gate among the gates of Paradise that God has opened for His chosen servants." Additionally, *Nahj al-balāgha* contains valuable discussions on enjoining good (*amr bi-l-maʿrūf*) and forbidding evil (*nahy ʿan al-munkar*), as well as on loyalty (*tawallī*) and disassociation (*tabarrī*).[1]

C) Ethical Cultivation in *Nahj al-balāgha*

Ethical cultivation has been one of the primary objectives of the prophets' missions and holds a significant place in Islamic culture, particularly in the conduct of the Infallibles. This subject received special attention from Imam ʿAlī (a), and rarely can a sermon or letter in *Nahj al-balāgha* be found in which he does not address ethical matters.[2] Ethical training encompasses both self-development and other-development, with *Nahj al-balāgha* prioritizing former over the latter. As the Imam states: "One who sets himself as a leader for the people must first discipline himself before instructing others. He must teach through his actions before teaching through his words. One who educates and refines himself is more deserving of reverence and veneration than one who merely educates and disciplines others."

The methods of self-development and self-purification in the words of the Imam are as follows:

1. Self-examination and accountability: "Servants of God, weigh your deeds and words before they are weighed, and take account of yourselves before you are held accountable."

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1. Scholars have also authored numerous treatises and books on this subject: (1) *Rūza dar Nahj al-balāgha*, Sayyid Ḥasan Mūsawī; (2) *Namāz dar Nahj al-balāgha*, ʿAlīrizā Rajāyī Tihrānī; (3) *Rāz-i namāz dar Nahj al-balāgha*, Ali Davani; (4) *Jang az dīdgāh-i Nahj al-balāgha*, Fakhreddin Hejazi; (5) *Jang wa Jahād dar Nahj al-balāgha*, Ḥusayn Shafāyī; (6) *al-Silm wa qaḍāyā al-ḥarb ʿinda al-Imām ʿAlī* (*a*), Muḥammad Mahdī Sham al-Dīn; (7) *Amr bi maʿrūf wa nahy az mukkar dar Nahj al-balāgha*, Ḥamīriḍā Kaffāsh.

2. Numerous articles and books have been published on this subject as well, some of which are as follows: (1) *Manhaj al-tarbiya ʿinda al-Imām ʿAlī* (*a*), ʿAlī al-Adīb; (2) *Saʿādat al-tarbiya fī Nahj al-balāgha*, Aḥmad ʿAlī al-Saʿd; (3) *Akhlāq dar Nahj al-balāgha*, Sayyid Kāḍim Arfaʿ; (4) *Maktab-i mihr: Uṣūl-i tarbiyat dar Nahj al-balāgha*, Mostafa Delshad Tehrani; *Dunyā dar Nahj al-balāgha*, Sayyid Mahdī Shas al-Dīn; (6) *Insān-i kāmil az dīdgāh-i Nahj al-balāgha*, Hassan Hassanzadeh Amoli.

2. Spiritual training: Imam ʿAlī, presenting himself as an example in this regard, states: "I discipline my soul so that it rejoices in a piece of bread for sustenance and is content with salt as a condiment."

3. Opposing one's desires and subjecting the soul to hardship is another method of self-purification. Describing the pious or the God-wary (*muttaqūn*), he states: "If his soul does not obey him in what is difficult, he does not grant it what it desires." He also says: "A pious person places his soul in hardship, while others find comfort in him. He burdens himself for his afterlife and relieves people from his troubles."

The most significant ethical terms mentioned in *Nahj al-balāgha* include God-wariness or piety (*piety*), asceticism, patience, benevolence, generosity, good character or temperament, trustworthiness, humility, gentleness and forbearance, having a good or charitable opinion of others, and modesty. Among these, the Imam places the greatest emphasis on the three concepts of piety, asceticism, and patience.

In *Nahj al-balāgha*, vices and unethical behaviors are condemned, and methods for their remedy and correction are provided. These vices include worldliness, arrogance, miserliness, falsehood, betrayal, anger, envy, self-conceit, greed, breaking promises, stubbornness, foul speech, disputatiousness, contentious argumentation, and mockery. Among these, the Imam places the greatest emphasis on warning against worldliness and avoiding arrogance and miserliness.

D) The Quran and *Nahj al-balāgha*

In *Nahj al-balāgha*, Quranic verses are cited in 122 instances, 11 of which include interpretation. Additionally, the Quran is described in 96 different passages.

Among the descriptions of the Quran in *Nahj al-balāgha*, Sermon 198 presents 42 characteristics as follows: (1) a light whose lamps never go out, (2) a radiance that never fades, (3) an ocean whose depths cannot be reached, (4) a path that does not mislead its traveler, (5) a flame whose brilliance never dims, (6) a criterion that distinguishes truth from falsehood, (7) a foundation whose pillars never crumble, (8) a healing remedy without side effects, (9) a truth whose supporters are never abandoned, (10) a spring of ever-flowing faith, (11) a fountainhead of knowledge and wisdom, (12) a source of honor that ensures its supporters never face defeat, (13) a garden and reservoir of justice, (14) the structure of Islam, (15) the vast land of truth where seekers and advocates of truth attain their goal, (16) an endless sea, (17) a spring that never dries, (18) a watering place that remains abundant regardless of how many benefit from it, (19) a resting place along the journey to truth, (20) a set of guiding signs that never dim, (21) a path fortified with protections against falling, (22) a refreshing water source for those thirsty for knowledge,

(23) a springtime for the hearts of deep thinkers, (24) a clear road for the righteous, (25) a cure for all ailments, (26) a light free from any darkness, (27) a firm and reliable rope for those who grasp it, (28) an impregnable fortress of great height, (29) a means of dignity and honor for those who entrust themselves to it and take it as their guardian, (30) a sanctuary of security for those who enter it, (31) a guide for those who take it as a model, (32) a justifiable excuse for those who argue with its logic, (33) an irrefutable proof for those who adhere to it, (34) a witness against those who oppose it, (35) a means of triumph for those who argue by it, (36) a deliverer to the goal for those who carry it (learn and act upon it), (37) a swift vehicle toward the objective, (38) a guide for those who reflect upon it, (39) a protective shield for those who seek refuge in it, (40) a vast reservoir of knowledge for those who seek learning, (41) a novel speech for narrators, and (42) a just and wise authority for judges and arbiters.

Among Imam ʿAlī's descriptions of the Quran is Sermon 109 of *Nahj al-balāgha*, where he says: "Learn the Quran, for it is the best of speech. Ponder over it, for it brings vitality to the hearts. Seek the cure for the ailments of your hearts through the light of the Quran, for it is a healing for the diseases of the chest. Recite it well, for it contains the most beneficial of narratives."

An example of Quranic interpretation in *Nahj al-balāgha* is the explanation of the verse "Indeed, we belong to God, and to Him we return" in saying 99, where Imam ʿAlī (a) says: "Our statement 'We belong to God' is an acknowledgment of our servitude, and our statement 'To Him we return' is an acknowledgment of our mortality and impermanence."[1]

E) A Manifestation of History in *Nahj al-balāgha*

Imam ʿAlī (a), as a great leader and social reformer, does not overlook history and its lessons. Throughout his statements, he frequently references historical events, emphasizing their instructive value. The presentation of historical matters in *Nahj al-balāgha* is not for storytelling or entertainment but for drawing lessons and providing moral, educational, and social insights. With his distinct perspective, ʿAlī (a) portrays history as a means of understanding divine traditions, just as historical accounts in the Quran serve to convey this profound truth. *Nahj al-balāgha*, by depicting historical

1. Several books and articles have been written on the relationship between *Nahj al-balāgha* and the Quran, some of which are titled as follows: (1) *al-Alfāẓ al-qurʾāniyya fī Nahj al-balāgha*, Sayyid Muḥammad Jaʿfar al-Ḥakīm; (2) *Rābiṭi-yi Nahj al-balāgha bā Qurʾān*, Sayyid Jawād Muṣṭafawī; (3) *Qurʾān dar āyini-yi Nahj al-balāgha*, Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi; (4) *Sīmāyi Qurʾān dar Nahj al-balāgha*, Ali Karimi Jahromi; (5) *Āyāt-i Qurʾān dar Nahj al-balāgha*, Muḥmmad Muḥmmadī Ishtihārdī; (6) *Qurʾān dar Nahj al-balāgha*, Abdollah Javadi-Amoli.

events, offers a vast treasury of human experiences, knowledge, and intellectual resources, broadening one's horizon of understanding. The Imam underscores the great reality that what governs all historical processes—including the rise and fall of states and the emergence and decline of civilizations—is the divine will, which operates through specific traditions and laws. He refers to these divine traditions using various terms, including tribulation (*bā's*), assaults (*ṣawlat*), retributions (*muthulāt*), days or significant events (*ayyām*), severe warnings (*qawāri'*), and incidents (*waqā'i'*).

In his exhortations, the Imam reminds us of this reality: the course of life for the present generation follows the same pattern as that of past generations, and what befell them will likewise befall those who come after. Therefore, one must take heed from history, learn its lessons, and, with a wise perspective on divine traditions and the universal laws governing history—laws that continuously repeat—use them for personal and societal benefit. By properly analyzing one's current circumstances, one can chart a path from what has been to what ought to be.[1] For instance, in Sermon 81, the Imam states: "Let the past of this world serve as an instructive light for its future, for the fragments of history resemble one another. In the end, its conclusion is linked to its beginning, and all of it is in a state of change and transience."

F) Politics, Governance, and Justice in *Nahj al-balāgha*

Governance and justice are among the most extensively discussed topics in *Nahj al-balāgha*. A significant portion of this invaluable book outlines the rights and responsibilities that individuals in society owe to one another, particularly the reciprocal rights of rulers and the people. According to the Imam, the mutual rights of the ruler and the nation surpass all other rights in importance, as the survival and integrity of any society, as well as its honor in both this world and the hereafter, depend on upholding these rights. One of the foundational social values emphasized in *Nahj al-balāgha* is social justice and the rejection of discrimination. The widespread presence of concepts such as upholding individual and social rights, ensuring equality in political and social matters, defending the oppressed against tyrants, preventing the plundering of public wealth, denying privileges to flatterers, valuing public opinion, and consulting the people has established *Nahj al-balāgha* as a manifesto of justice and introduced the Imam to the world as the "Voice of Human Justice." His motto and practical approach are summed up

1. Quoted, with modifications, from: Ja'farī, "Tārīkh dar Nahj al-balāgha." Several articles and books have been written on the historical aspects of *Nahj al-balāgha*, some of which are as follows: (1) *Arzish-i Tārīkh dar Nahj al-balāgha*, 'Abbās Naṣr; (2) *Bīnish-i Tārīkhī-yi Nahj al-balāgha*, Ya'qūb Ja'farī; (3) *Ḥarakat al-Tārīkh 'ind al-Imām 'Alī* (*a*), Muḥammad Mahdī Shams al-Dīn.

in his words: "By God, even if I were given the seven realms with all they contain under the heavens in exchange for disobeying God and unjustly seizing the husk of a barley grain from an ant, I would never do so." In his famous letter to Mālik al-Ashtar, the Imam (a) elaborates on the rights of the people, the duties of rulers and government officials toward various social classes, and, conversely, the responsibilities of the people toward their leaders. Many scholars have devoted their efforts to translating and commenting on this historic letter.[1]

5. Doubts, Criticisms, Textual Errors, and Distortions of *Nahj al-balāgha*

Doubts

A number of biographers and scholars of *Rijāl* (reliability assessment of hadith transmitters) have cast doubt on the attribution of the contents of *Nahj al-balāgha* to Imam ʿAlī (a). Regarding the authenticity of these words, early figures such as Ibn Khallikān, al-Dhahabī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, as well as later scholars like Aḥmad Amīn and Aḥmad Zakī,[2] have raised doubts and objections. Some have even attempted to accuse al-Sharīf al-Raḍī of fabricating these statements and attributing them to the Imam. Among their claims, they have stated:

1. Since this book contains disparagement and criticism of the Prophet's Companions, such as Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, Muʿāwiya, and ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, and since some of its sermons—such as the Shiqqshiqiyya Sermon—include crude language regarding the caliphs, it cannot be attributed to ʿAlī (a).

2. In *Nahj al-balāgha*, there is mention of *waṣiyya* (bequest or will) and *wiṣāya* (succession or custodianship), whereas such issues had not arisen among Muslims.

3. *Nahj al-balāgha* is composed in a rhymic prose (*saj*ʿ) style and employs numerous rhetorical and literary devices. Since such a style had not been customary in speech and oration up to that time, this book cannot be attributed to ʿAlī (a).

1. See Anṣārī, "Kitābshināsī-yi ʿahdnāma wa waṣiyyatnāma-yi Amīr al-muʾminīn (a)." Numerous articles and books have been written on the political and social discussions in *Nahj al-balāgha*. Some of these works include: (1) *Nimūdārī az ḥukūmat-i ʿAlī* (*a*), Ḥusayn Saʿīd; (2) *Jāmiʿi az dīdgāh-i ʿAlī* (*a*), Walī Allāh Barzigar; (3) *Āzādī dar Nahj al-balāgha*, Abdolali Bazargan; (4) *al-Fikr al-iqtiṣādī fī Nahj al-balāgha*, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Mūsawī; (5) *al-Idāra wa al-niẓām al-idārī ʿinda al-Imām ʿAlī* (*a*), Muḥammad Bāqir al-Mūsawī; (6) *Dars-hāyi siyāsī az Nahj al-balāgha*, Muḥammad Taqī Rahbar.

2. See Ṣafwat Pāshā, *ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib*, 122-61.

4. The book mentions animals such as the bat, peacock, ant, and locust with such precision that they had not been previously addressed. Moreover, such animals were not found in the Arabian Peninsula.

5. In *Nahj al-balāgha*, statements are made implying its speaker's knowledge of the unseen (*ʿilm al-ghayb*). However, knowledge of the unseen belongs exclusively to God, and such a claim is far removed from ʿAlī.

6. In *Nahj al-balāgha*, there is an excessive emphasis on asceticism (*zuhd*) and renunciation of the world, whereas such an approach aligns with Christian teachings. In the sacred law of Islam, asceticism and the abandonment of worldly pleasures have not been advocated to such an extent.

7. Social life is discussed in this book in a manner that had not been previously addressed up to that time.

8. In other works, some passages of *Nahj al-balāgha* are attributed to other individuals, indicating that at least parts of *Nahj al-balāgha* do not originate from ʿAlī (a).

9. In *Nahj al-balāgha*, numbers are used in explaining matters or describing virtues and vices—for example, stating that seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*) has six meanings or that faith (*īmān*) has four pillars. Such an approach was not customary in early Islam or during the era of the Companions.

10. In literary and historical works predating al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, there is no mention of the statements attributed to Imam ʿAlī in *Nahj al-balāgha*.

11. Some sermons and letters have become quite lengthy, such as al-Qāṣiʿa sermon and the covenant of Mālik al-Ashtar. This is despite the fact that lengthy orations were not customary in that era and were considered contrary to the art of eloquence.

12. The philosophical concepts found in some sermons were not discussed in that era but rather emerged during the time of al-Sharīf al-Raḍī.

13. The sermons in *Nahj al-balāgha* that are attributed to ʿAlī (a) resemble written texts more than oral speeches. Therefore, it seems that these passages were composed by someone in writing rather than being delivered as spoken orations.

14. The scientific, philosophical, and social terminology found in ʿAlī's sermons and speeches was not common in his era. For instance, terms such as *ayn* and *kayf* (the categories of place and quality), which are philosophical jargons, or words like *nāsikh* (abrogating) and *mansūkh* (abrogated) and *mujmal* (vague) and *mubayyan* (elucidated), which belong to the terminology of the principles of jurisprudence (*ʿilm al-uṣūl*), were not prevalent at that time.

Replies to the Doubts

Some of the doubts raised about *Nahj al-balāgha* stem from bias and hostility. Accusing a revered and pious scholar such as al-Sharīf al-Raḍī or his brother Sayyid al-Murtaḍā of forgery and fabrication is entirely unacceptable to those who know their character. Would someone whose eloquence reaches such a pinnacle of knowledge and rhetoric—unmatched by others—attribute his own words to another?[1]

Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd offers a clear and firm statement regarding the authenticity of the entire *Nahj al-balāgha*. He writes:

> "Many followers of desire claim that a significant portion of *Nahj al-balāgha* was composed and fabricated by a group of Shiite orators, and some parts of the book have even been attributed to al-Sharīf al-Raḍī and others. However, these individuals are blinded by the veil of sectarian prejudice and have deviated from the clear and straight path of truth.
>
> To briefly clarify the falsehood of this assumption, I must say that if *Nahj al-balāgha* were not from ʿAlī (a), there would be only two possibilities: either all of it comes from others, or only a portion of it does. The weakness and invalidity of the first possibility are clearly evident, as the attribution of some passages to ʿAlī (a) has been established through frequent transmission (*tawātur*), and many—if not most—of the scholars of hadith and historians have transmitted numerous parts of it. Since these transmitters were not Shiite, no one can claim that their reports were influenced by bias. The second possibility also supports the authenticity of *Nahj al-balāgha*, for anyone familiar with the art of oratory, well-versed in the science of eloquence (*ʿilm al-bayān*), and possessing a refined and experienced literary taste can undoubtedly distinguish between infirm, eloquent, and highly eloquent speech, and between original statements and newly fabricated ones... When a reader contemplates *Nahj al-balāgha*, they find it to be like pure, flowing water from a single source—unified in spirit and essence, and consistent in style and tone ... With this clear and decisive argument, the error of those who claim that this book, or parts of it, were fabricated and falsely attributed to ʿAlī (a) becomes manifest."[2]

Regarding al-Shiqshiqiyya sermon, Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd narrates from his teacher Abū l-Khayr al-Wāsiṭī that one day he was reciting this sermon before his master Ibn Khashshāb. After finishing, Abū l-Khayr asked Ibn Khashshāb, "Do you believe this

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1. On the authenticity of the attribution of *Nahj al-balāgha* to Imam ʿAlī (a), see Dāwud, *Nahj al-balāgha: Tawthīquhu wa nisbatuhu ilā al-Imām ʿAlī* (*a*).

2. See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 10: 127-29.

sermon is fabricated?" Ibn Khashshāb replied, "By God, never! I am as certain that these words belong to ʿAlī as I am certain that you are Muṣaddiq the son of Shabīb." Abū l-Khayr then remarked, "Many people claim that this sermon was composed by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī himself." To this, Ibn Khashshāb responded, "How could these words, this intellect, and this style be achieved by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī or anyone else?"... He then turned to Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd and added, "By God, I have seen this sermon in books written two hundred years before the birth of al-Sharīf al-Raḍī ..."[1] After narrating this account, Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd writes, "I have found the major part of this sermon in the works of Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī, the leader of the Muʿtazilites in Baghdad, who lived during the reign of al-Muqtadir al-ʿAbbāsī—long before al-Sharīf al-Raḍī was even born."

Imtiyāz ʿAlī Khān ʿArshī, in his esteemed book *Istinād Nahj al-balāgha*, writes:

> "Al-Shiqshiqiyya sermon has been subjected to more criticism and objections than any other sermon, as in it, the Commander of the Faithful [Imam ʿAlī (a)] speaks about the issue of the caliphate, unveils the secrets behind its usurpation, and expresses his grievances ... Opponents of *Nahj al-balāgha* are particularly disturbed by this sermon and claim that al-Sharīf al-Raḍī himself fabricated it. However, many scholars and writers who lived before al-Raḍī have recorded this sermon in their works, including: (1) Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Barqī al-Qummī (d. 274/888) in *al-Maḥāsin*, (2) Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Thaqafī al-Kūfī (d. 283/896-97) in *al-Ghārāt*, (3) ʿAbd Allāh b. Maḥmūd al-Kaʿbī al-Balkhī, a Muʿtazilī scholar (d. 319/931), in his writings, (4) Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Jubbāʾī al-Baṣrī, a Muʿtazilī scholar (d. 303/915-16), who transmitted the sermon, (5) Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Abū Jaʿfar Qiba al-Rāzī, a student of Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī, in his book, (6) al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥusayn al-Qummī, in *ʿIlal al-sharāʾiʿ* and *Maʿānī l-akhbār*, and (7) al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, the teacher of al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, in *al-Irshād*."[2]

However, regarding criticism of the Prophet's Companions, it must be said that just as there are good and bad individuals, believers and disbelievers, and righteous and unrighteous people among the general population, there were also diverse individuals among the Companions, who should be judged based on their actions and behavior. As stated in the Noble Quran, the criterion for superiority is piety (*taqwā*), and in this regard, there is no distinction between individuals—whether they are Companions or not.

1. See Ibid., 1: 205, 206.
2. ʿArshī, Istinād Nahj al-balāgha, 20-21.

Al-Bukhārī (d. 255/870) narrates a hadith from the Prophet (s) in which he states that not all of his Companions remained true followers, and among them were those who introduced innovations into the religion after his passing.[1] If ʿAlī, in *Nahj al-balāgha*, speaks about Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, Muʿāwiya, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, or Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī, it is because they were worldly individuals who prioritized personal interests over Islamic principles. Through their ambition and desire for power, they became the cause of discord and corruption in the Muslim community.

Sayyid ʿAbd al-Zahrāʾ al-Ḥusaynī, addressing the doubt regarding bequest or will as well assuccession, writes: "Will or bequest was a common and even obligatory practice. It was customary among prophets, and the Prophet of Islam also made significant bequests, including the designation of his successor. Moreover, this matter is mentioned in the Quran. Even the first caliph appointed ʿUmar as his successor and instructed people to obey him."[2]

The response to the objection regarding rhymed prose and rhetorical embellishment is that the use of literary devices such as rhymed prose was not unfamiliar to the orators and eloquent speakers during ʿAlī's time. The presence of the Noble Quran and the hadiths of the Prophet is sufficient proof of this. Rhymed prose can also be found in the speeches of other caliphs, including Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān. Therefore, embellished speech was common and widespread during ʿAlī's lifetime, leaving no doubt regarding the authenticity of such speech being attributed to the Prophet (s), his Companions, and ʿAlī's contemporaries.

Although rhymed prose is a commendable literary feature, *Nahj al-balāgha* is not composed entirely in this style. This indicates that Imam ʿAlī (a) employed this art naturally and without affectation. For instance, in the letters of *Nahj al-balāgha*, this style is either entirely absent or used only sparingly.

A precise description of anything stems from deep contemplation of it. How is it, then, that some find it unacceptable for ʿAlī (a) to speak about the locust with such accuracy, to describe the ant with such depth, or to offer a detailed depiction of the peacock? Was the elephant native to Hejaz when its story was mentioned in the Noble Quran? The Abyssinian army brought elephants with them to Hejaz, and the people saw them. Could it not be that someone from Mecca, Medina, or another part of the Arabian Peninsula possessed such an animal? Moreover, in those days, various goods and animals were brought to Kufa as taxes, and royal gifts from across the world were sent there. Thus,

1. See Ḥusaynī al-Khaṭīb, *Maṣādir Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 116, 117.
2. See Ibid., 1: 121-51; Āl Yāsīn, *Nahj al-balāgha az kīst?* 34-36.

it is entirely possible that ʿAlī saw a peacock in Kufa, reflected deeply upon its creation, and studied it with an insight sharper than that of the most intelligent and perceptive scholars.

Regarding knowledge of the unseen, it suffices to say that ʿAlī's foresight stemmed from the knowledge of the Prophet (s), and the Prophet's knowledge originated from the knowledge of God. The Noble Quran frequently speaks of the unseen; for instance, one verse states, "[the knowledge] of the unseen belongs only to Allah", and in Surah al-Jinn, it is said, "Knower of the Unseen, He does not disclose His [knowledge of the] Unseen to anyone." This noble verse explicitly affirms that God grants His prophets knowledge of the unseen and hidden realities, enabling them to witness things and speak of matters beyond the grasp of others. The Prophet himself foretold events that transpired exactly as he had predicted after his passing. Similarly, *Nahj al-balāgha* contains numerous statements from ʿAlī regarding prophecies and future events. He spoke of Muʿāwiya's domination over Muslim lands, the governorship of al-Ḥajjāj al-Thaqafī in Iraq and his tyranny, the submersion of Basra, and the Mongol invasion of Iraq. The Commander of the Faithful (a) said, "Before departing this world, the Messenger of God (s) summoned me and informed me of the events that would follow him. He taught me a thousand branches of knowledge, from each of which a thousand more would unfold."[1]

Those who raise the objection regarding the encouragement of asceticism have neither reflected on the Quran's perspective on worldly matters nor examined *Nahj al-balāgha* with due diligence. In *Nahj al-balāgha*, Imam ʿAlī (a) speaks of the condemnation of the world in accounts such as those of Nawf al-Bikālī, Hammām, and Shurayḥ. Likewise, in some of his letters, he calls upon governors and officials to practice asceticism and renounce worldly pleasures. However, ʿAlī's intention in all these statements is not an absolute rejection of the world, but rather a warning against attachment to it. He highlights the disgrace of a mindset that drives a person to pursue wealth, status, and power at any cost, sparing no injustice or oppression, and seeking pleasure and indulgence by any means possible.

Those who raise objections regarding social life have failed to understand the Quranic perspective on society and have overlooked the fact that ʿAlī never overstepped the teachings of the Quran in social matters. It is truly astonishing that these critics object to *Nahj al-balāgha* when it speaks of asceticism, yet they also raise objections when they encounter passages that present the opposite perspective.

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1. See Subḥānī, *Nahj al-balāgha wa āgāhī az ghayb*; Maḥallātī, *Kashf al-mughayyabāt dar akhbār-i ghabīyya-yi Amīr al-mu'minīn* (*a*).

The fact that a few sentences from *Nahj al-balāgha* have been attributed to others in some literary sources and references does not negate the overall attribution of the book to Imam ʿAlī (a), nor does it prove that its ascription is fabricated. This phenomenon also applies to certain hadiths of the Prophet (s) and statements of his Companions. If a hadith from the Prophet or a line of poetry from a poet is attributed to someone else in a book, it does not justify doubting the authenticity of all hadiths or rejecting the entire collected works of that poet. It is also entirely possible that those individuals or sources borrowed passages from *Nahj al-balāgha* and attributed them to themselves!

Regarding the claim that literary and historical works before al-Sharīf al-Raḍī are devoid of the content found in *Nahj al-balāgha*, it must be noted that numerous reputable literary sources predating him exist. Sayyid ʿAbd al-Zahrāʾ al-Ḥusaynī al-Khaṭīb has enumerated 109 such works in his book. The authors of these texts composed their works before the year 400/1010, frequently citing the sermons, letters, and statements of Imam ʿAlī (a). When we examine the writings of these scholars and find Imam ʿAlī's words recorded within them, it becomes evident how far removed this claim is from the truth.

The categorization of meanings found in *Nahj al-balāgha* is not a novel phenomenon. Similar structuring and organization appear in the sayings of the Prophet and the statements of the second caliph. Should we then assume that all of these were fabricated by the Shia and falsely attributed to their original speakers?

The response to the objection regarding the length of the sermons and letters in *Nahj al-balāgha* is that the length or brevity of a sermon, letter, or covenant depends on the context of the speech. Scholars of rhetoric have stated that eloquence lies in adapting speech to the demands of the situation, and the writings, sermons, wills, and letters of ʿAlī (a) adhere to this principle. This approach was also common in that era; for instance, Suḥbān Wāʾil, renowned for his eloquence among the Arabs, once stood to deliver a sermon in the presence of Muʿāwiya and spoke continuously from the conclusion of the noon prayer until the time of the afternoon prayer—yet none of the attendees found his speech to be at odds with the principles of eloquence and oratory.[1]

The objection regarding the presence of philosophical concepts in *Nahj al-balāgha* can be addressed by noting that logic and philosophy have always been part of human intellectual life. The ideas expressed in ʿAlī's words are truths that describe the attributes of the Almighty, similar to what appears repeatedly in the monotheistic verses of the

1. Ibn Nubāta, *Sarḥ al-ʿuyūn*, 80.

Quran and the sayings of the Prophet. His words do not employ the technical terms of later logic and philosophy. If there are terms found in his speech, which were later adopted by logicians, it does not mean that ʿAlī (a) used them to intend anything but its original lexical meaning, which only became a technical jargon in subsequent eras. As for why such expressions were not recorded from his contemporaries, it is because they lacked the capacity to conceive and comprehend these ideas. They were deprived of the profound knowledge that the Imam (a) possessed regarding the realities of existence and, therefore, did not engage in such discussions.

In response to the objection that the sermons in *Nahj al-balāgha* seem written rather than oral, it must be understood that oratory, like all human speech, varies according to time, place, and the differing states of the speaker and the audience. Each occasion demands a particular style of speech; for instance, religious occasions such as festivals, Friday prayers, or the rain prayer (*ṣalāt al-istisqāʾ*) require specific types of sermons. Political and social contexts carry a different tone and fervor, while the battlefield calls for passionate and stirring words. These contextual nuances are fully observed in the sermons of *Nahj al-balāgha*. For example, when a reader examines a sermon delivered by ʿAlī (a) on the battlefield, they can vividly envision the atmosphere of war. This ability to evoke the setting and emotions of a moment is a hallmark of true oratory, and it is a defining characteristic of the sermons found in *Nahj al-balāgha*.

The objection regarding the use of scientific terminology in *Nahj al-balāgha* has been primarily raised by Orientalists and modernists. Their unfamiliarity with the Quran and the Prophetic Tradition (*Sunna*), as well as their lack of knowledge about ʿAlī's close relationship with the Prophet (s) and his vast intellectual and spiritual heritage, has led them to make such claims. Given that ʿAlī (a) was an extraordinary individual, it is hardly surprising that the themes and concepts found in his sermons were unprecedented in Arab thought regarding divine knowledge and Islamic sciences. After all, was Arab society fully aware of all the topics introduced by the Quran? Were the Arabs knowledgeable about all aspects of monotheism, the attributes of God, the histories of past prophets, the conditions of nations and peoples, the events of the Day of Judgment, or the descriptions of paradise and hell, as well as the ethical and social teachings found in the Quran?[1]

1. The following references discuss the doubts raised about *Nahj al-balāgha* and their responses: (1) Muḥammad Ḥasan Āl Yāsīn, *Nahj al-balāgha li man?* (2) Hādī Kāshif al-Ghiṭāʾ, *Madārik Nahj al-balāgha wa daf' al-shubuhāt ʿanh*; (3) Ḥusaynī al-Khaṭīb, *Maṣāir Nahj al-balāgha*, 1: 112-85; (4) Jalālī, *Dirāsat ḥawla Nahj al-balāgha*, 52-75; (5) ʿUṭāridī, "Shak wa Shubha dar Nahj al-balāgha"; (6) al-Bakkāʾ, "Shubuhāt Nahj al-balāgha."

Criticisms

The eminence and grandeur of *Nahj al-balāgha* are evident to all those with insight, taste, and artistic sensibility. Every fair-minded scholar praises al-Sharīf al-Raḍī for compiling this work. However, since his primary objective was to select passages of the highest eloquence and rhetorical excellence, his work inevitably faced certain shortcomings and challenges—such as omitting the chains of transmission in some instances and excerpting portions of sermons and statements.

In the introduction to *Bahj al-ṣabāgha fī sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī, while praising al-Sharīf al-Raḍī for compiling *Nahj al-balāgha* and asserting that no book comparable to it has been authored after the Quran, raises the following criticisms against him:

1. Since al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's focus was on collecting the most eloquent and rhetorically refined words of Imam ʿAlī (a), in sermons such as Sermons 266, 166, and 90, he included phrases that Imam ʿAlī's enemies had attributed to him with deceptive eloquence and guile.

2. At times, in his effort to select the most eloquent and rhetorically refined words of Imam ʿAlī (a), al-Sharīf al-Raḍī truncated certain statements, including one part while omitting another. In some cases, this resulted in the loss of the intended meaning of Imam ʿAlī's words, making them unclear to the reader. This is akin to someone quoting the Quranic verse "Do not approach prayer" without following it with "when you are intoxicated," thereby altering the intended meaning.

3. The sources al-Sharīf al-Raḍī relied on for compiling *Nahj al-balāgha* were mostly from Sunni works, some of which contain words that have been refuted in Shiite hadiths—such as what appears in Sermon 57.

4. In certain cases, he attributed the words of other Imams (a) to Imam ʿAlī (a). For example, aphorism or saying 289 belongs to Imam al-Ḥasan (a), and saying 227 is a statement Imam ʿAlī (a) transmitted from the Prophet (s).

5. Some statements were assigned to contexts different from their original setting. For instance, Letter 62 is introduced as "From his letter to the people of Egypt with Mālik al-Ashtar," while al-Thaqafī in *al-Ghārāt* and others state that this sermon was actually delivered as an exhortation to jihad after the conquest of Egypt and the killing of Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr.

6. In certain instances, Imam ʿAlī's words appear distorted, likely due to errors in the manuscripts al-Raḍī relied on. For example, in Letter 57, al-Raḍī records "Kharajtu min

ḥayyī hādhā" (I departed from my tribe), whereas the correct phrase is "Kharajtu makhrajī hādhā" (I departed as I have now departed).[1]

Textual Errors and Distortions[2]

Scholars have long been dedicated to transmitting and transcribing *Nahj al-balāgha*. Before the advent of printing, each manuscript holder ensured the accuracy and preservation of the text by carefully comparing and collating their copies with other handwritten manuscripts, adhering to scholarly integrity and rigorous verification methods. As a result, fewer discrepancies, distortions, or transcription errors are found in the handwritten manuscripts of *Nahj al-balāgha*. In fact, the surviving early manuscripts generally possess greater authenticity and accuracy than printed versions. While these manuscripts may differ in the arrangement of sermons and statements, they exhibit significantly fewer textual distortions or alterations.

However, after *Nahj al-balāgha* was sent to printing houses for publication and distribution, numerous editions were produced without careful comparison and correction based on the original manuscripts. As a result, errors, transcription mistakes, and textual distortions found their way into the printed editions of this valuable work.

Dr. Moḥammad Hādī Amīnī writes on this matter: "The modern alterations in the printed editions of *Nahj al-balāgha* amount to 300 instances, as I have noted in my personal copy." He then documents examples of these distortions, some of which include:

1. In the first sermon of *Nahj al-balāgha*, all manuscript versions read: "*Man jazzaʾah faqad jahilah, wa-man ashāra ilayhi faqad ḥaddah*" (whoever recognizes parts for Him mistook Him; and whoever pointed at Him admitted limitations for Him). However, in the printed editions of Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ, the phrase "*wa man jahilah faqad ashāra ilayh*" (and whoever mistook Him pointed at Him) has been added after "*wa man jazzaʾahu faqad jahilah*." This additional phrase is fabricated and meaningless.

2. In Sermon 106, the manuscript versions read: "*Fa huwa ablagh al-manāhij, wādiḥ al-walāʾij*" (It is the brightest of all paths, the clear among passages). However, in the printed editions, the word "*wādiḥ*" has been altered to "*awḍaḥ*" (the clearest).

3. In aphorism or saying 190, the manuscript versions state: "*Wā ʿajabāh! Atakūn al-khilāfa bi l-ṣaḥāba wa-lā takūn bi l-ṣaḥāba wa l-qarāba?*" (How strange? Could the

1. See Tustarī, *Bahj al-ṣabāgha*, 1: 19-21.

2. Regarding textual errors and distortions in *Nahj al-balāgha*, see Amīnī, "Nahj al-balāgha bayna ʿawāṣif al-taḥrīf wa al-nuqṣān"; Tustarī, *Bahj al-ṣabāgha*, 1: 29-39.

caliphate be through the [Prophet's] companionship but not through [his] companionship and [his] kinship?). However, in Muḥammad ʿAbduh's printed edition, this sentence has been altered to: "*Wā ʿajabā an takūn al-khilāfa bi l-ṣaḥāba wa l-qarābah*" (How strange for the caliphate to be through companionship and kinship!).[1]

4. In aphorism or saying 252, the manuscript versions state: "*Faraḍ Allāh al-īmān taṭhīran min al-shirk … wa l-imāma niẓāman li-l-umma wa al-ṭāʿa taʿẓīman li-l-imāma*" (Allah has laid down iman (belief) for purification from polytheism; … Imamate [i.e. Divine Leadership] for the orderliness of the community and obedience [to Imams] as a mark of respect to the Imamate). However, in Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ's printed edition, the word "*al-imāma*" (imamate) has been changed to "*al-amāna*" (trust), and in Muḥammad ʿAbduh's edition, it has been altered to "*al-amānāt*" (trusted things).

5. Sermon 31, as found in the manuscript version, as well as in Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd's commentary (vol. 2, p. 162) and *Ikhtiyār miṣbāḥ al-sālikīn* (p. 22), reads: "*Wa min kalāmih qālah lammā anfadh ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās raḥimah Allāh ilā al-Zubayr qabl wuqūʿ al-ḥarb yawm al-Jamal li-yastafīnah ilā ṭāʿatih*" (From the word he stated when he dispatched ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās to al-Zubayr before the outbreak of the battle on the day of Jamal to call him to his obedience). However, in the printed edition, it has been altered to: "*Wa min kalāmin lahu li-Ibn al-ʿAbbās lammā arsalahu ilā al-Zubayr yastafiʾuhu ilā ṭāʿatihi qabla ḥarb al-Jamal*" (From his word to Ibn al-ʿAbbās when he dispatched him to al-Zubayr calling him to his obedience before the Battle of Jamal).

6. In Sermon 181, the phrase "*wa akrama bih dīnah*" (honored His religion with him) in the manuscript version has been altered in the printed edition of Muḥammad ʿAbduh and those who followed his version to "*akmala bih dīnah*" (perfected His religion with him).

7. In Sermon 192, the phrase "*wa waḍaʿanī fī ḥijrih wa ana walīd yaḍummunī ilā ṣadrih*" (When I was only a child he took charge of me. He used to press me to his chest) in the manuscript version has been altered in Muḥammad ʿAbduh's commentary (vol. 2, p. 157) and in Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ's edition (p. 300) to "*wa ḍammanī fī ḥijrih wa ana walad yaḍummunī ilā ṣadrih*" (When I was only a child he took charge of me. He used to press me to his chest).

1. See Ṭabāṭabāyī, "Baḥth-ī darbāra-yi 'A takūn al-Khilāfa bi l-ṣuḥba wa l-qarāba?'."

6. Bibliography of *Nahj al-balāgha*

Over the past thousand years since the compilation of *Nahj al-balāgha*, approximately a thousand independent books have been written about it, along with hundreds of articles exploring its various dimensions.

The books written about *Nahj al-balāgha* fall into the following categories: (1) Commentary on the book, including full commentaries, commentaries on sermons, letters, and short sayings, explanations of difficult phrases, as well as annotations and marginal notes; (2) Translation of the book, whether full translations, translations of sermons, letters, short sayings, or specific sections; (3) Versification of the book following the same categorization; (4) Introduction to *Nahj al-balāgha*, covering general overviews and analysis of specific concepts; (5) Critical editions and printed versions of the book; (6) Thematic classification, subject indexes, and monographs on specific topics; (7) Lexicons and concordances; (8) Glossaries and dictionaries of terms; (9) Selections and anthologies of *Nahj al-balāgha*; (10) Studies on the sources and references of *Nahj al-balāgha*; (11) Biographical studies of figures mentioned in *Nahj al-balāgha*; (12) Supplements and additional material related to *Nahj al-balāgha*; (13) Manuscript studies or codicology; and (14) Bibliographies.

Among these categories, the largest number of books are dedicated to commentaries on *Nahj al-balāgha*, while the fewest are found in bibliographies, codicology, and biographical studies of figures mentioned in the text.[1] Below is a summarized list of notable works related to *Nahj al-balāgha*:

1. Commentaries on *Nahj al-balāgha*

Commentary writing on *Nahj al-balāgha* began shortly after its compilation and has continued to the present day. Over this period, hundreds of commentaries and annotations have been written on the entire book or specific sections, making it difficult to enumerate all of them. Some researchers have dedicated independent articles and essays to compiling the titles of these commentaries.[2]

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1. Isfandiyārī, *Kitābpajūhī*, 229-30.

2. For example, al-Muḥaddith al-Nūrī (d. 1320/1902) listed 26 commentaries on *Nahj al-balāgha* in the epilogue to his *al-Mustadrak*. Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn (d. 1371/1952) mentioned 31 commentaries, ʿAllāma Amīnī (d. 1970) recorded 89 commentaries in volume four of *al-Ghadīr*, Āqā Buzurg Ṭihrānī (d. 1970) identified 148, and Ḥusayn Jumaʿa al-ʿĀmilī counted 210 commentaries in his work *Shurūḥ Nahj al-balāgha*.

Commentaries on *Nahj al-balāgha* in 5-10th/12-14th Centuries

The commentaries on *Nahj al-balāgha* in 5-10th/12-14th Centuries include the following: (1) the commentary of ʿAlī b. Nāṣir Sarakhsī, known as *Aʿlām Nahj al-balāgha*; (2) the commentary of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī, titled *Minhāj al-barāʿa*; (3) the commentary of Ẓahīr al-Dīn al-Bayhaqī, ʿAlī b. Zayd al-Farīd al-Khurāsānī (d. 565/1169-70), known as *Maʿārij Nahj al-balāgha*; (4) the commentary of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Khwārazmī, a scholar of the 6th/13th century; (5) the commentary of Sayyid Faḍl Allāh al-Rāwandī, a scholar of the 6th/13th century; (6) the commentary of Afḍal al-Dīn Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Māhābādī, a prominent figure in literature and scholarship in the 6th/13th century; (7) the commentary of Quṭb al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Kaydarī (active in 610/1213), titled *Ḥadāʾiq al-ḥaqāʾiq fī fasr daqāʾiq afṣaḥ al-khalāʾiq*; (8) the commentary of ʿIzz al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Abī l-Ḥadīd al-Muʿtazilī (d. 655/1258), which is the most famous and extensive Arabic commentary on *Nahj al-balāgha*; (9) the commentary of Kamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-ʿAtāʾiqī al-Ḥillī, a renowned Shiite scholar of the 8th/15th century; (10) the commentary of Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Ṣaghānī (d. 650/1252-53), mentioned in the book catalog *Tuḥfat al-abrār*; (11) the commentary of ʿAllāma Ḥasan b. Yūsuf b. Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325);[1] (12) the three-tiered commentaries of Kamāl al-Dīn Maytham b. ʿAlī b. Maytham al-Baḥrānī, a philosopher and scholar of the seventh century AH, including a major (*Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*), intermediate (*Miṣbāḥ al-sālikīn*), and minor commentary (*Ikhtiyār miṣbāḥ al-sālikīn*); (13) the commentary of Abū Ṭālib Tāj al-Dīn, known as Ibn Sāʿī (d. 674/1276); (14) the commentary of Raḍī al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Mūsā b. Ṭāwūs al-Ḥillī (d. 664/1266); (15) the commentary of Muḥammad b. ʿUmar Fakhr al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210); (16) the commentary of Maḥmūd al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazmī, referenced by ʿAlī b. Zayd al-Bayhaqī in *Maʿārij Nahj al-balāgha*; (17) the commentary of Sadīd al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Mīrak al-Rāzī, also mentioned by al-Bayhaqī; (18) the commentary of Saʿd al-Dīn Masʿūd al-Taftāzānī (d. 729/1322); (19) the commentary of Yaḥyā b. Ḥamza al-ʿAlawī al-Yamānī (d. 749/1348-49), titled *al-Dībāj al-muḍī*ʾ; (20) the six-volume commentary of Yaḥyā b. Abī ʿAlī al-Bukhārī (d. 630/1332-33), a student of Ibn Shahrāshūb; (21) the commentary of Ismāʿīl b. Yaʿqūb b. al-Jundī (7th/14th century); (22) *al-Nafāʾis fī sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, an anonymous

1. ʿAzīz Allāh ʿUṭāridī, who edited and published *Sharḥu Nahj al-balāgha li shāriḥ*^{in} *muḥaqqiq min aʿlām al-qarn al-thāmin* (a commentary on *Nahj al-balāgha* by an eighth-century scholar), has suggested the possibility that this commentary was authored by al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī.

commentary, with a surviving manuscript dating to 759/1358; and (23) *al-Tuḥfa al-ʿilliyya fī sharḥ al-balāgha al-Ḥaydariyya* by Sayyid Afṣaḥ al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī, written in 884/1479.[1]

Since the tenth century until today, dozens of brief and extensive commentaries on *Nahj al-balāgha* have been written, many of which have been documented in bibliographic sources and manuscript catalogs.[2]

2. Translations of *Nahj al-balāgha*

The widespread reception of the teachings embedded in the words of Imam ʿAlī (a) in *Nahj al-balāgha* inspired writers and scholars to translate this profound source of truth into various languages. Since the 6th/13th century, two anonymous translations of *Nahj al-balāgha* have survived. Additionally, translations from the 7th and 9th/14-16th centuries, as well as numerous translations from the 10th/17th century onward, have reached us, though only a limited number of them have been published.

Nahj al-balāgha has now been translated into most of the world's major languages, including Persian, English, Urdu, Spanish, German, Italian, French, Serbian, Croatian, Turkish, Albanian, Gujarati, Sindhi, and Giyamki. The number of *Nahj al-balāgha* translations exceeds one hundred. There are approximately ten translations into English, thirteen into Urdu, and sixteen into other languages, along with numerous translations of selected excerpts from the text.[3]

3. Prints and Publications of *Nahj al-balāgha*

The *Nahj al-balāgha* has been printed hundreds of times since the introduction of the printing industry in the East. It has been published in lithographic and typographic

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1. See Ṭabāṭabāʾī, "Fī riḥāb Nahj al-balāgha (3)"; ʿUṭāridī, "Shāriḥhn-i Nahja al-balāgha az qarn-i panjim tā hashtum"; Ṣadrāyī Khūyī, "Nuyafti-hāyi pīrāmūn-i Nahj al-balāgha."

2. In addition to the aforementioned works, numerous commentaries on *Nahj al-balāgha* have been written in Persian from the tenth century AH to the present. The oldest known Persian commentary is *Rawḍat al-abrār fī sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha* by Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ḥasan al-Zawāraʾī, completed in 947/1540. Among the most comprehensive and detailed Persian commentaries is *Tafsīr Nahj al-balāgha* by Ayatollah Mohammad Taghi Jafari (d. 1998).

3. ʿAlīqulī, *Kitābshināsī Nahj al-balāgha*; Ustādī, *Kitābnāma-yi Nahj al-balāgha*; Tihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 4: 144-46; ʿĀrif Naqawī, *Batṣaghīr*, 1: 96-104; Ṭabāṭabāʾī, "Fī riḥāb Nahj al- al-balāgha (3)." For a bibliography of translations of *Nahj al-balāgha* into various languages, see Isḥāqī, "Manbaushināsī-yi tarjuma-hāyi Nahj al-balāgha." The translation of *Nahj al-balāgha* into Persian has accelerated in recent times, with more than thirty Persian translations available to date. Among the translators of *Nahj al-balāgha* into Persian in previous centuries, notable figures include ʿAlī Zawāraʾī, Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusaynī Ilāhī Ardabīlī, Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Dastghīb Ḥusaynī Shīrāzī, and Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Rūghanī Qazvīnī. Moreover, the translation of *Nahj al-balāgha* into various languages has not been limited to prose; poetic translations have also been produced in languages such as Hindi, Sindhi, and Persian.

formats in countries such as Iran, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Qatar, often accompanied by various commentaries and translations.

Khān-Bābā Mushār, in his catalog of printed Arabic books, has documented thirteen editions of *Nahj al-balāgha* published in Iran (in the cities of Tehran, Tabriz, and Isfahan), Egypt, and Lebanon.[1] Meanwhile, ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Rifaʿī, in *Muʿjam al-maṭbūʿāt al-ʿArabiyya fī Īrān*, details the characteristics of eighteen Iranian editions of *Nahj al-balāgha*. He identifies the earliest printed edition in Iran as a lithographic print published in Tabriz in 1247/1831.[2]

Ṭabāṭabāʾī has documented 109 editions of *Nahj al-balāgha* published worldwide between 1347/1928 and 1414/1993.[3] According to his research, *Nahj al-balāgha* was first printed as a lithographic edition in Tabriz in 1247/1831. Subsequent editions were also published in Tabriz in the years 1259/1843, 1267/1850, 1288/1871, and 1289/1872.

Major Published Versions of *Nahj al-balāgha*

Notable editions of *Nahj al-balāgha* include (1) the 1317/1899 Cairo edition, edited and annotated by Muḥammad Ḥasan Nāʾil Marṣafī in two volumes, (2) the Beirut edition with the commentary of Muḥammad ʿAbduh, first published in 1302/1884, (3) the edition by Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ, printed in Beirut in 1387/1967, (4) the edition by Sayyid ʿAlī Naqī Fayḍ al-Islām Iṣfahānī (d. 1988), which includes a critical edition along with a Persian translation, published in 1,301 pages in Tehran, (5) the edition by the Nahj al-Balagha Foundation, edited by Shaykh Azizollah Atarodi based on several early and valuable manuscripts, published in 1413/1992, and (6) the Qatar edition, printed in 1406/1985 by Dār al-Thaqāfa.

4. Lexicons of *Nahj al-balāgha*

Several books have been authored in Persian on the study and analysis of the vocabulary of *Nahj al-balāgha*. Notable examples include (1) *Farhang-i lughāt-i Qurʾān-i Majīd wa Nahj al-balāgha* by Alaoddin Mojtabavi, (2) *Farhang-i lughāt-i Nahj al-balāgha* by Kazem Farhoomandi, (3) *Ḥall-i lughāt-i Nahj al-balāgha* by Mawlawī Iʿjāz Ḥusayn Badiwānī, (4) *Vāzhi-hā-yi Nahj al-balāgha* by Emran Alizadeh, (5) *Sayrī dar farhang-i lughāt-i Nahj al-balāgha* by Karim Zamani Jafari, (6) *Mufradāt-i Nahj al-balāgha* by Seyed Ali Akbar Ghorashi, (7) *Farhang-i Nahj al-balāgha* by Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ, translated by Mostafa Rahiminia, (8) *Farhang-i vāzhi-hā-yi muʿādil-i Nahj al-balāgha* by Mohammad Dashti, and (9) *Qāmūs-i Nahj al-balāgha* by Mohammad Ali Sharghi.

1. Mushār, *Fihrist*, 975-76.
2. Rifāʿī, Muʿjam al-maṭbūʿāt, 322.
3. Ṭabāṭabāʾī, "Fī riḥāb Nahj al- al-balāgha (3)," 24-42.

5. Concordances of *Nahj al-balāgha*

Several concordances and thematic indexes have been compiled for *Nahj al-balāgha*. Here, a few notable lexical concordances are briefly mentioned: (1) *al-Kāshif ʿan alfāẓ Nahj al-balāgha* by Seyed Javad Mostafavi, (2) *al-Muʿjam al-mufahras li-alfāẓ Nahj al-balāgha* by Mohammad Dashti and Seyed Kazem Mohammadi, and (3) *Muʿjam alfāẓ Nahj al-balāgha* by Seyed Kazem Arfa.

6. Selections and Anthologies of *Nahj al-balāgha*

Given that *Nahj al-balāgha* is an extensive work covering diverse topics, many scholars have compiled thematic selections or excerpts from it. Numerous such anthologies, with or without translations in Persian and other languages, have been published. One of the earliest selections is *Maṭlaʿ al-ṣabāḥatayn wa-majmaʿ al-fiṣāḥatayn*, authored by Abū l-Saʿdāt Asʿad ibn ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Iṣfahānī, known as Shafrūya (d. 640/1242-43),[1] which gathers selected Prophetic sayings from *al-Shihāb* by Qāḍī Quḍāʿī alongside selected sayings of ʿAlī from *Nahj al-balāgha*. Another notable selection is *al-Ṭarāʾif*, a compilation from *Nahj al-balāgha*, with a manuscript (no. 5356) housed in the Western Hamadan Library. Additionally, *al-Nafāʾis* is an anthology compiled by a Sunni scholar in the eighth century AH, with a manuscript (no. 1870) preserved in the Astan Quds Razavi Library, dated 759/1358.

Ṭarāʾif al-ḥikma wa-badāʾiʿ al-maʿrifa[2] is another selection from *Nahj al-balāgha*, compiled by Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥusaynī al-Qazwīnī (d. 1270/1853-54), who also wrote a commentary on it. Likewise, Ṣāʾin al-Dīn ʿAlī al-Iṣfahānī, known as Ibn Turka (d. 830/1426-27), compiled an anthology from *Nahj al-balāgha*.[3]

Some contemporary scholars have also compiled anthologies and selections from *Nahj al-balāgha*, including Ahmad Ali Babaee, Hadi Khatami Borujerdi, Seyed Kazem Arfa, Seyed Ataollah Majdi, Javad Fazel, Asadollah Mobasheri, Seyed Jafar Shahidi, Fazlollah Kompani, and Mohammad Moghimi.

Rawāʾiʿ Nahj al-balāgha is a selection from *Nahj al-balāgha* compiled by George Jordac, which has been published in Persian translation under the title *Zībāʾī-hāyi Nahj al-balāgha*. Additionally, selections from *Nahj al-balāgha* have been translated and

1. See Ṣadrāyī Khūyī, "Maṭlaʿ al-ṣabāḥatayn wa majmaʿ al-faṣāḥatayn"; Ḥusaynī Ishkiwarī, "Nigāhī bi Maṭlaʿ al-ṣabāḥatayn wa majmaʿ al-faṣāḥatayn"; Ṭabāṭabāʾī, "Fī riḥāb Nahj al- al-balāgha (3)."
2. Tihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 6: 147, 15: 155; Ustādī, *Fihrist*, 287; Ishkiwarī, *Fihrist*, 1: 154.
3. Tihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 14: 140.

published in various languages, including Italian, French, English, Bengali, and Urdu, further expanding its reach and influence across different cultures.

In the bibliography of *Nahj al-balāgha*, 66 selected excerpts from the book have been introduced. The esteemed scholar Ṭabāṭabāʾī, in *Fī riḥāb Nahj al-balāgha*, has identified 37 titles of selections from *Nahj al-balāgha*, while Sayyid ʿAbd al-Zahrāʾ Ḥusaynī Khaṭīb has also introduced several selections in *Maṣādir Nahj al-balāgha*.[1]

7. Manuscripts of *Nahj al-balāgha*

Many exquisite and early handwritten manuscripts of *Nahj al-balāgha* have survived. The manuscript written by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī remained available until the time of Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd and Ibn Maytham, and numerous copies were transcribed from it and dispersed across the world. According to Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, several copies of *Nahj al-balāgha* were produced during al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's era. After the author's time and before the advent of the printing press, hundreds of copies were transcribed, some of which have survived the ravages of time. A portion of these remaining manuscripts has been identified and cataloged in the indexes of private and public libraries.

Approximately 300 early and more recent manuscripts of *Nahj al-balāgha* have been identified in private and public libraries in Iran. Ṭabāṭabāʾī has detailed the characteristics of 160 handwritten copies of *Nahj al-balāgha*, transcribed between the fifth and tenth/12-17th centuries.[2] Additionally, I have documented the features of 83 handwritten manuscripts of *Nahj al-balāgha* from libraries in Qom.[3]

Here, we introduce seventeen of the oldest and most important surviving manuscripts of *Nahj al-balāgha*.

1. The 469/1077 manuscript, copied in Arabic naskh script by Ḥusayn b. Ḥasan al-Muʾaddib in Dhū al-Qaʿda 469 AH, preserved in the Ayatollah Marʿashī Library in Qom,

1. Jamʿī az nivīsandigān, *Nahj al-balāgha az manẓar-i farzānigān*, 292-95; Ṭabāṭabāʾī, "Fī riḥāb Nahj al- al-balāgha (3)," 49-62.

2. See Ṭabāṭabāʾī, "al-Mutabaqqī min makhṭūṭāt Nah al-balāgha ḥattā nihāyat al-qarn al-thāmin"; Ṭabāṭabāʾī, "Mā tabaqqā min makhṭūṭāt Nahj al-balāgha (2)."

3. Jamʿī az nivīsandigān, *Nahj al-balāgha az manẓar-i farzānigān*, 213-35. A report on 78 handwritten copies of *Nahj al-balāgha* in Tehran libraries was published in the *Waqf mirath javidan* quarterly (no. 25): 106–108. Professor Kazem Modir Shanechi authored an article titled "Nahj al-balāgha and its highly precious manuscripts" in Persian, published in the *Journal of the Faculty of Theology and Islamic Studies of Mashhad* (no. 12): 176–93. Sayyid Mahmoud Marʿashi wrote an article on early and more recent manuscripts of *Nahj al-balāgha* in *Mirath-e Shihab* (no. 11): 77–93. Additionally, Sayyid ʿAbd al-Zahraʾ Husayni Khatib introduced several precious manuscripts of *Nahj al-balāgha* in *Maṣādir Nahj al-balāgha* (vol. 1, pp. 187–96).

Iran, under catalog number 3827.[1] The library has published a facsimile edition of this manuscript.

2. The 485/1092-93 manuscript, copied with the handwriting of ʿAdnān b. Ibrāhīm, housed in the library of Seyed Mohammad Ali Rozati in Isfahan, Iran.

3. The 494/1101 manuscript, completed in the hand of Faḍl Allāh b. Ṭāhir Ḥusaynī on 4 Rajab 494 AH, published in a facsimile edition by the Library of the Jameh Mosque of Tehran in 1403/1982-83.

4. A 5th/12th century manuscript, housed in the library of Ḥusayn ʿAlī Maḥfūẓ, introduced in *Maʿhad al-makhṭūṭāt* journal (no. 6), 47.

5. A 5th/12th century manuscript, revised and featuring an endorsement (*taqrīẓ*) by Yaʿqūb b. Aḥmad and his son Ḥasan Yaʿqūb, housed in the library of Sayyid Hibat al-Dīn Shahrastānī.

6. Another 5th/12th century manuscript, housed in the library of Sepahsalar School in Tehran under catalog number 3083, containing extensive marginal notes and copied from the author's original manuscript.[2]

7. A 5th/12th century manuscript that was originally in Baghdad and was later transferred to London.

8. A precious 5th/11th century manuscript, collated by the jurist Sahl b. Amīr al-Raqāqī in Jumādā al-Thānī 483/1090 and copied in the hand of Ḥasan b. Yaʿqūb b. Aḥmad, was originally in the private library of Seyed Ali Atashi in Yazd, Iran, and has since been transferred to the Center for the Revival of Islamic Heritage in Qom.

9. A 5th or 6th/12-13th century manuscript, transcribed by Ḥasan b. Zayd al-Ḥasanī al-Bayhāqī, housed in the private library of Sheikh Ali Alavi in Yazd, Iran.[3]

10. A 5th or 6th/12-13th century manuscript, formerly housed in the library of Mohammad Amin Khonji in Tehran, and introduced in *Maʿhad al-makhṭūṭāt* journal (no. 3), 59.

11. A 5th or 6th/12-13th century manuscript, written in Kufic script, housed in the Majlis Library under catalog number 8059.

12. A 501/1107-8 manuscript, housed in the Ḥusaynīyah Ghufrān Maʾāb Mumtāz al-ʿUlamāʾ Library in Lucknow, India.

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1. See Ishkiwarī, *Fihrist*, 10: 206.
2. See Shīrāzī, *Fihrist*, 2: 155, 5: 373.
3. Afshār and Dānishpajūh, *Nashriyya-yi nuskhi-hāyī khaṭṭī*, 450.

13. The 512/1118-19 manuscript, formerly housed in the library of Seyed Mohammad Mohit Tabatabaee, mentioned in *al-Dharīʿa*.[1]

14. The 525/1131 manuscript, previously in the possession of Sayyid Muḥsin Kashmīrī, mentioned in *al-Dharīʿa*.[2]

15. A 6th/12th century manuscript, read and collated by Majd al-Dawla Abū l-Muẓaffar Muḥammad b. Zayn al-Dīn under the supervision of Muṣaddiq b. Ḥasan, from whom he received permission to transmit it in Rajab 529/1135. This manuscript has been repeatedly collated and corrected and is currently preserved in the Ayatollah Marʿashī Library under catalog number 2310.[3]

16. The 538/1144 manuscript, copied in the hand of ʿAlī b. Abī l-Qāsim b. ʿAlī al-Ḥājj, was collated and corrected against the manuscript of Afḍal al-Dīn Ḥasan al-Qummī in mid-Shaʿbān 538 AH. It is currently housed in Maulana Azad Library at Aligarh Muslim University under catalog number 485.

17. The 544/1149 manuscript, transcribed by Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Naqīb. It was collated and corrected in Ṣafar 544 AH. Marginal notes indicate careful revision and correction. Originally housed in the library of Fazel Khan School in Mashhad, Iran, it is now preserved in the Astan Quds Razavi Library under catalog number 13847.

1. Tihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 24: 413.
2. Ibid.
3. Ishkiwarī, *Fihrist*, 6: 292.

Economic Justice*

Mohammad Mahdi Karami
Askar Dirbaz

Introduction

Justice has been a fundamental issue in three major fields of human knowledge: (1) in philosophy and theology, as an attribute of divine action; (2) in ethics, as an attribute of human action; and (3) in social sciences, as an attribute of laws and human relationships. This study examines economic justice and the means of its realization from the perspective of Imam ʿAlī, the Commander of the Faithful (a), with a focus on his practice.

The problem of economic justice from the perspective of Imam ʿAlī (a) is examined in two sections. The first section addresses the definitions and outlines of economic justice, drawing on his words and practice. It explores the concept, significance, and effects of economic justice, the criteria for just conduct, the realization of economic justice in society, its role as a fundamental objective, and a comparative analysis of these issues with other systems. The second section addresses the practical measures proposed by Imam ʿAlī (a) for achieving economic justice. This includes discussions on economic balance and its instruments, the necessity of establishing a public sector, the authority and resources of the state within the Islamic economic system, and social solidarity or

* "'Idālati Iqtiṣādī." In *Danishnāma-yi Imām ʿAlī* (*a*), 7: 65-106. Tehran: Pajūhish-gāhi Farhang wa Andīsha-yi Islāmī, 1385 Sh.

mutual guarantee (*takāful*) as a mechanism for ensuring justice, all examined through his statements and practice. Finally, the study considers the obstacles to justice from Imam ʿAlī's perspective, providing insight into the challenges faced by human societies in realizing justice and identifying these barriers within our contemporary Islamic community.

Definitions and Outlines

The Notion of Economic Justice

The mission and purpose of the prophets and infallible Imams (a) have been to convey divine laws and rulings, as well as to educate and purify society in order to establish justice and equity among the people. This principle is highlighted in numerous Quranic verses and hadiths of the Prophet's Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*). One such verse states: "Certainly We sent Our apostles with manifest proofs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that mankind may maintain justice" (Q 57:25).

This verse presents the establishment of justice and equity as the purpose of the prophets' mission, a goal that is realized through the establishment of a government and the implementation of divine laws and rulings. However, as indicated by "so that mankind may maintain justice" (Q 57:25), it is ultimately the people who, under the guidance of prophetic governance and instruction, establish justice.[1] The prophets (a) do not directly bring about justice; rather, justice is an abstract concept derived from the just conduct of individuals and just institutions.

Based on what we learned from the Quran and numerous hadiths from the Imams (a), particularly Imam ʿAlī (a), we cannot expect explicit definitions or explanations of concepts and terms. However, by examining their statements as well as the policies and initiatives they pursued, one can discern examples or outcomes of certain phenomena and speculate the notions they had in mind.

Imam ʿAlī (a) regarded the undertaking of governance and the responsibility of the Islamic state as a means to prevent the oppression of the tyrants and to support the oppressed. He stated: "I swear by him who split open the seed, the one who created living beings—were it not for those who appealed to me in that time, if the presence of supporters had not made it my binding duty, if God had not taken a pledge from the

1. Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 29: 242.

learned that they would not permit tyrants to ravage or the subjugated to starve, I would have flung the caliphate's reins onto its shoulders."[1]

He established his rule on the foundation of resisting oppression and enforcing divine rulings to uphold justice and equity. Thus, he said to ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās: "By God, it's [...] worth more to me than command over you! That I undertake only to establish truth and fight falsehood!"[2]

Imam ʿAlī's commitment to justice was so evident and deeply embodied in his conduct that the cause of his martyrdom has been attributed to the intensity of his pursuit of justice. Thus, the presence of profound expressions of justice in his speeches and letters, along with his elucidation of the means and mechanisms for achieving it, is clear and natural. From his words, three meanings of justice can be discerned:

1. Justice as Equality and the Elimination of Discrimination and Oppression

We can refer to several statements of Imam ʿAlī (a) from which this interpretation of justice can be gleaned:

"Give equal attention to all in glance and look, such that the powerful are not emboldened to expect unfair favors and the weak do not despair of getting justice."[3] In a letter to Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, the governor of Egypt, Imam ʿAlī (a) instructed him to avoid any form of discrimination in his treatment of the people and not to deprive them of their right to equality. He warned that if such discrimination were observed, the weak and vulnerable members of society would perceive it as injustice, while the wealthy and privileged would see it as an opportunity to exploit and oppress the weak. Thus, the term "justice" (*ʿadl*) in this context can be understood as equality and the elimination of discrimination, with equality serving as both an instance and a sign of justice.

"A ruler's passions, if they lean in one direction, prevent him from dispensing justice. Let the rights of all people be equal in your eyes, for injustice is never defensible. Stay away from actions you would find deplorable if directed at you."[4] Imam ʿAlī (a), in this statement, highlights the role of personal desires in violating equal rights and condemns such discriminatory practices as contrary to justice. His words imply that a just approach entails treating individuals equally and upholding their rights without bias, as a manifestation of justice. A similar statement is found in another letter, where he states: "They personally experienced my justice—they saw it, heard it, understood it, and

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 3.
2. Ibid., sermon 33.
3. Ibid., letter 27.
4. Ibid., letter 59.

realized that all are equal before me in claiming their rights—and they fled from this toward nepotism! Let them go far away and yet farther!"[1]

2. Justice as the Observance of Rights

Rights and duties are two sides of the same coin. Wherever a duty is prescribed, there is necessarily a corresponding right, and wherever a right is established, an obligation follows with certainty. The divine messengers were entrusted with conveying God's commandments, which were, in essence, duties corresponding to rights that had to be upheld. In other words, duty is nothing but the observance of rights. For this reason, the prophets rested content with conveying the rights and called upon people to uphold them.

In Imam ʿAlī's words, various rights are introduced, including the mutual rights of rulers and their subjects. From certain expressions in which he uses the term *ʿadl* (justice), one can discern that justice also signifies the observance of rights: "If subjects render the ruler his rights and the ruler renders them theirs, truth will become strong, the ways of religion will be established, the waymarks of justice will be fixed, and the road of the Sunnah will become easy to follow. Thereby, the age will become virtuous, the state can be expected to remain stable, and its enemies' ambitions will be thwarted. But if subjects overpower their ruler, or if the ruler overburdens his subjects, voices will be divided, oppression will rage, religious corruption will increase, and the straight road will be abandoned."[2]

In this statement, the observance of rights is believed to lead to the establishment of justice, while their neglect is equated with oppression and injustice. In other words, upholding rights is synonymous with justice, whereas disregarding them leads to tyranny: "By God, even if the money had been spent to wed women or buy slave-girls, I would still have required its return. Justice has a wide scope—whoever finds it narrow should know that oppression is even more limiting."[3] Here, the restitution of unlawfully allocated lands—the rightful property of Muslims, which were unrightfully given to others—is described as an act of justice. This means that a just approach necessitates the observance of everyone's rights and, in cases of transgression, their restitution.

1. Ibid., letter 70.
2. Ibid., sermon 216.
3. Ibid., sermon 15.

Moreover, Imam ʿAlī (a) highlights the consequences of pursuing justice, stating that justice brings relief, while oppression ultimately ensnares everyone, including the oppressor himself:

> "I had shared my charge with you and kept you as close to me as an intimate garment, I trusted none of my family to support and serve me, to stay true to his charge, more than I trusted you. But when you saw that the age had turned rabid against your cousin, the enemy was attacking with savage madness, the people were becoming increasingly corrupt, and the community had risen up in revolt and abandoned me, you turned your shield in your cousin's face. You left me, along with all the others; you abandoned me, along with all the others; you betrayed me, along with all the others. You failed to support your cousin or fulfill your trust. When you fought beside me earlier, you appear to have had something other than God's cause in mind, to have never truly held a mandate from your Lord; you appear to have been deceiving this community in order to defraud them, as though, all along, you had intended to cheat them of their war gains. For when you saw the opportunity to swindle, you were swift to charge and quick to attack. You swooped and ran off with whatever money you could grab—money held in trust for their widows and orphans—like a lean-hipped wolf pouncing and snatching a bleeding, limping goat … By God, if al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn had done what you have done, they would have met with no leniency from me, nor would they have gotten their way! I would have wrested from them what was due and redressed the injustice wrought by their actions."[1]

The concept of justice is closely tied to rights; therefore, wherever a right is violated, the opposite of justice—oppression—takes place. Thus, Imam ʿAlī's statement reaffirms that justice and oppression apply in contexts where rights are not upheld or violated.

3. Justice as the Proper Position and Observance of Merits

A proper situation in which rights and merits are fully observed is regarded as just in the words of the Imam (a). He considers justice to be realized when everything is placed in its proper position. Each matter attains its appropriate place only when the necessary considerations related to it have been duly observed: "Justice puts things in their rightful place."[2]

By carefully examining the three meanings derived from the Imam's words, the second meaning—observance of rights—can be seen as an inclusive definition

1. Ibid., letter 41.
2. Ibid., wisdom 437.

encompassing the others. This is because his emphasis on eliminating discrimination and upholding equality stems from the equal rights that God has ordained for all. Moreover, whether rights are understood as objective and existential entities or as conventions, their acceptance depends on establishing a proper and rightful state that aids in rectifying relationships. Only under such conditions can these rights become legitimate and binding. Therefore, given the connection between the first and third definitions with rights, the observance of rights can be regarded as justice, and the concept of justice itself can be abstracted from conduct in which rights are upheld. Accordingly, economic justice amounts to the observance of rights as they pertain to economic issues and relationships.

While the term "economic justice" does not explicitly appear in the words of Imam ʿAlī (a), he extensively addressed issues and implemented policies during his governance that aimed at establishing justice in the economic sphere. His statements contain numerous references to economic rights, and adherence to these rights, along with mechanisms for their realization, makes economic justice attainable. The concept of "economic justice," in this sense, can be derived from these teachings. It is important to note that economic justice is closely tied to matters of distribution, and whenever economic justice is discussed, attention naturally turns to fair methods of income distribution. Imam ʿAlī's words likewise focus on distribution and the necessary instruments for its just implementation.

Significance and Impacts of Justice

Numerous effects can be attributed to justice, all of which underscore its significance. The Architect of existence has emphasized it in multiple verses of the Quran, describing the establishment of justice and equity as the purpose and mission of the prophets (s). He has instilled justice within the fabric of existence to ensure the stability of human life, safeguarding it from chaos and tyranny: "He raised the heaven high and set up the balance, declaring, 'Do not infringe the balance! Maintain the weights with justice, and do not shorten the balance!'" (Q 55:7-9).

In this section, we turn to the illuminating words of the Commander of the Faithful (a), to examine the significance and effects of justice in his teachings. According to the Commander of the Faithful (a), nothing sustains governments and serves as the light of the rulers' eyes except justice. On one hand, it ensures security, prosperity, and the descent of blessings for the people; on the other, it strengthens the stability and authority

of the government, fostering the compliance of its subjects. We will present select passages from his words, categorized according to relevant themes and previous works.

"Justice is the lifeblood of [human societies]"[1] (security, peace, and a comfortable life); "[I] clothed you through my justice in the garment of security";[2] "Nothing fosters the prosperity of cities like justice does" (development and flourishing);[3] "Justice multiplies divine blessings and mercy";[4] "Whoever upholds justice, God will strengthen his dominion";[5] "Justice is the foundation of stability and the strength of governments."[6]

The significance of justice is further emphasized in another statement of Imam ʿAlī (a) "The implementation of justice, even for a single moment, is better and more valuable than seventy years of worship accompanied by night prayers and fasting throughout its days."[7] In response to a question regarding the preference between justice and generosity, the Imam (a) said: "Justice puts things in their rightful place, while generosity takes things out of their proper sphere. Justice is a universal motivator, while generosity is a particular aspect. Justice is thus the nobler and better of the two."[8]

In this statement, the Imam (a) highlights the necessity of upholding justice and fairness. When compared to generosity and benevolence, he presents justice as universal and indispensable. This means that a society can survive without generosity, but not without justice. Therefore, justice is a foundational value around which all other virtues revolve, a goal that takes precedence over other objectives. It is obligatory to establish justice upon having rights, receiving the rulings, and attaining full knowledge of them.

From the entirety of Imam ʿAlī's statements, it can be concluded that a society plagued by injustice and the violation of individual and collective rights may appear active on the surface, but it remains deprived of the true essence of life and a virtuous existence. In contrast, with the implementation of justice, not only do material benefits and economic growth flourish, but life also finds meaning, guiding people toward righteousness and salvation. The aforementioned discussions encompass economic and social justice, as well as philosophical justice. Some of these directly signify economic

1. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, 1: 64.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 87.
3. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, 6: 68.
4. Ibid., 3: 205.
5. Ibid., 5: 355.
6. Ibid., 2: 69.
7. Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 72: 352.
8. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 437.

justice, while others indicate social justice, which includes economic justice within its scope.

Economic Justice: Efficiency and Welfare

Given the previous discussions, where justice was introduced as the criterion and foundation of human relationships—particularly economic relations—and where the legitimacy of rights and laws was briefly linked to their justice and fairness, an important question arises: Does justice always take precedence? In other words, if there is a conflict between choosing an economically efficient position and ensuring its justice and fairness, which should be prioritized?

In conventional (capitalist) economics, there is little concern for the concept of justice as we define it, as efficient and optimal positions are often assumed to align with justice.[1] Thus, such issues are rarely raised. However, from an Islamic perspective, a difference response may be offered. In economics, efficiency is achieved when (1) productive resources are not wasted, (2) production occurs at the lowest possible cost, and (3) consumers derive the maximum possible utility from production, leading to an overall increase in consumer welfare.[2] The question, then, is whether a situation that meets these criteria is necessarily a just one.

We can imagine situations where economic efficiency and, consequently, economic welfare are achieved, yet the situation remains unjust. This is because such a system may inadvertently restrict market competition for many individuals or grant freedoms that are not legitimate and do not align with divine laws. Take the market system as an example. In a purely free-market economy, without government intervention or redistributive mechanisms (such as income transfers), we witness severe imbalances in income distribution, the emergence of monopolies, and moral decline. At the same time, any form of government intervention or income redistribution is often associated with a loss of efficiency. In such a scenario, should we abandon justice in favor of efficiency, or reject efficiency to uphold justice?

Given Imam ʿAlī's stance on economic justice and its significance, as well as the rulings and guidelines we have received about avoiding extravagance and waste, diligence and expertise in endeavors, and the spiritual effects of upholding divine rights and justice, we can establish an efficient system that ensures both justice and the protection of rights. Moreover, if a situation yields less material benefit, the spiritual

1. Sen, *Barābarī va āzādī*, 1-15.

2. ʿUbādī, *Mabāḥithī dar iqtiṣād-i khurd*, section, kārāyī va iqtiṣād-i rifāh.

rewards derived from acts such as charity, adherence to religious rulings, and seeking God's pleasure—along with acknowledging that the pursuit of justice and the observance of rights contribute to increased sustenance, blessings, and prosperity—ultimately result in a higher overall fulfillment, both materially and spiritually, compared to other situations.

Some of Imam ʿAlī's statements suggest the precedence of justice over conventional efficiency, given the conditions we have mentioned. For instance, in a letter to Mālik al-Ashtar, he states:

> "Be good to merchants and artisans and instruct your officers to be good to them as well, including those who reside in your towns, those who travel to sell their wares, and those who profit by physical labor. These workers increase everyone's benefits and provide them with goods … Know also, however, that many merchants can be excessively stingy and monstrously avaricious. They hoard grain and fix prices. These things harm the common people and stain the reputation of rulers. Forbid hoarding, for the Messenger (s) forbade it. Ensure that trading is peaceful, scales are balanced, and prices are set at levels that harm neither buyer nor seller."[1]

It can be inferred from the words of the Imam (a) that an Islamic government should not limit itself to merely overseeing the market; rather, intervention is sometimes necessary. This is because individuals differ, and some may take actions to protect their personal interests at the expense of society, which would be a failure on the part of the rulers. One might also deduce from his statement that if efficiency and economic justice come into conflict, justice takes precedence over efficiency, since the conditions for efficiency in economics, as previously mentioned, are primarily associated with a free-market system and the unrestricted determination of prices—meaning that neither the government nor any other authority should interfere in price setting.

Imam ʿAlī, the Commander of the Faithful (a), unequivocally rejects unfair pricing, whether it harms the seller or the buyer, and considers the occurrence of such practices in an Islamic society a weakness in governance. This is because price exploitation, in any form, contradicts justice—whether it occurs within an efficient economic system or outside of it. His words are unconstrained in this respect. Therefore, if just economic conduct aligns with efficiency, it leads to an ideal economic state. However, if a conflict arises between efficiency and justice in any aspect of the economy, his statement suggests that justice should take precedence.

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1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 53.

Strategies for Achieving Economic Justice

Introduction

Economic systems have proposed various strategies for achieving justice. The diversity in these strategies does not stem from varying interpretations of justice itself but rather from differing perspectives on fair rights, the origins of these rights, and their specific instances according to justice theorists. Some, like David Ricardo and Milton Friedman, define justice in terms of ensuring freedom and equality, rejecting any government or external intervention in the economy.[1] In contrast, figures such as Sismondi and Henri de Saint-Simon emphasize a significant role for governments in ensuring public interests, assuming equal access to resources and production.[2]

In this study, we do not aim to evaluate how successful each proposed strategy might be or delve into their explanations. Rather, we focus on presenting the strategies for achieving economic justice from Imam ʿAlī's perspective and highlighting some of the differences between these approaches and those proposed by other economic systems. Given Islam's strong emphasis on the implementation of justice—seeing it as both possible and necessary through the guidance of divine messengers and the willful actions of the people—it naturally considers the necessary tools, strategies, and policies for its realization. This is because economic justice is regarded as the highest and most fundamental goal within the Islamic economic system.

Grounds for Achieving Economic Justice

1. Just Laws and Rights

Rights can be broadly categorized into two main types:

A. The rights whose legitimacy can be independently discovered and established by human reason, considering the relationship between an action and its purpose. An example is the right to livelihood, without which life becomes impossible.

B. The rights whose legitimacy cannot be discerned merely by considering the relationship between an action and its purpose. Instead, they are accessible only through divine revelation, established and communicated in accordance with human needs and interests.

1. Qadīrī-Aṣl, *Sayr-i andīsha-yi iqtiṣādī*, 247-50.
2. Sen, *Barābarī wa āzādī*, Introduction: 1-45.

The second category cannot be constructed or established by convention, while those that are conventional may vary across different customs, temporal and spatial contexts—especially depending on the legislators' status and influence—or may not receive adequate attention. The reason for the failure of non-Islamic economic systems lies in their lack of fundamental rights and laws rooted in revelation. In contrast, these rights are precisely and clearly articulated in the Islamic economic system, and we have drawn upon Imam ʿAlī's words in this regard.

2. Islamic Upbringing and Belief in Spirituality

Economic justice cannot be achieved through force or domination. Drawing inspiration from verse 25 of Surah al-Ḥadīd (57), it can be asserted that economic justice will not prevail in society unless the people themselves seek its implementation and cooperate with its enforcers. After stating the purpose of sending prophets and revealing the Book of Law, God declares: "so that mankind may maintain justice."[1] Thus, it is essential to create the necessary conditions for the pursuit of justice—or in other words, uncovering the innate inclination toward justice. This process is guided and reinforced in an Islamic society through both faith in the legitimacy of Islamic rights and awareness of the Hereafter and the accountability of deeds.

The Imam (a) states: "If God has granted a per- son wealth, he should use it to help kin, feed the guest, free the captive and the hostage,3 and give to the mendicant and the debtor. Even when difficult, he should pay his dues and endure adversities to earn God's reward."[2] Through ethical advice, proper upbringing, and belief in the origin and the afterlife, it becomes possible to realize economic justice—whether by forgoing one's own rights or upholding the rights of others.

3. Islamic Government

The practical experience of capitalist systems has demonstrated that expecting laws and regulations to be enforced automatically and solely through individual will, without state intervention or oversight, is both unrealistic and impossible. Today, even those who advocate for economic freedom and continue to uphold it recognize the necessity of state involvement or supervision. What matters, however, is how different systems perceive the necessity of government. In the following sections, particularly in our discussion on creating the public sector, we will examine this issue from Imam ʿAlī's perspective and highlight the advantages of this view over other proposed theories.

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1. Makārim-Shīrāzī, *Tafsīr-i nimūna*, 23: 372.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 142.

Policies and Strategies for Achieving Economic Justice

Succinctly put, the realization of economic justice depends on just laws, fair and justice-promoting enforcers, and effective enforcement mechanisms. In this section, we explore the policies and tools that can be designed in light of these conditions, drawing upon the words and practices of Imam ʿAlī (a).

The overarching policies for establishing economic justice, as outlined in the Islamic economic framework and reflected in the words and actions of Imam ʿAlī (a), can be categorized into two main principles: economic balance and social solidarity (or mutual guarantee).

A. Economic Balance

The concentration of wealth disrupts social order and deepens class divisions within society. Therefore, the Islamic economic system, drawing inspiration from the Quran, the sayings of the Imams (a), and their economic and administrative practices, has implemented measures to decentralize wealth and prevent its accumulation in the hands of a privileged few. The Quran highlights this principle as follows: "The spoils that Allah gave to His Apostle from the people of the townships, are for Allah and the Apostle, the relatives and the orphans, the needy and the traveller, so that they do not circulate among the rich among you. Take whatever the Apostle gives you, and refrain from whatever he forbids you, and be wary of Allah. Indeed Allah is severe in retribution" (Q 59:7).

In a sermon, Imam ʿAlī (a) interpreted this verse as follows:

> "We, the Ahl al-Bayt, are the kinsfolk referred to in the Quran, whom God has mentioned in the verse alongside His own name and that of His Prophet (s), stating: 'The spoils that Allah gave to His Apostle from the people of the townships, are for Allah and the Apostle, the relatives and the orphans, the needy and the traveler, so that they do not circulate among the rich among you. Take whatever the Apostle gives you, and refrain from whatever he forbids you, and be wary of Allah [about family of Muḥammad (s)]. Indeed, Allah is severe in retribution' (Q 59:7)."[1]

In light of the point emphasized by the Quran and Imam ʿAlī's interpretation of it, the policies for wealth decentralization in the Islamic economic system can be summarized as follows:

1. Ḥur al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil*, 6: 357; Rayshahrī, *Mawsūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib* (*a*), 4: 124.

1. Delineating the Boundaries of Ownership

In the Islamic economic system, the ownership of productive resources and goods is divided into three categories: (a) private sector, (b) public sector, and (c) communal ownership. Inspired by the Islamic economic doctrine, which is rooted in divine revelation and the words of the Imams, the Islamic economic system recognizes not only private ownership but also public and communal ownership. Imam ʿAlī's statements place particular emphasis on these forms of ownership.

The policy of multiple ownership structures and the delineation of their boundaries—particularly the allocation of a portion of revenues for the general public and their equal distribution—can be interpreted as a means of preventing wealth concentration in the hands of a privileged few and eliminating poverty and class disparity. Imam ʿAlī (a) describes the philosophy behind the equal distribution of public treasury funds as a safeguard against wealth accumulation among the rich, stating: "Just as the Prophet distributed [public funds] equally, I have done the same so that wealth does not circulate exclusively among the affluent."[1]

From the words of Imam ʿAlī (a), it is understood that certain revenues and financial resources do not fall under the ownership of the private or public sectors, but are instead allocated to the general public, to be distributed equally among them. Among these revenues are taxes, which the Imam considers as a means of support for all people, both the recipients of taxes and those who pay them.[2] He instructs the governor of Madain to collect taxes from the land and distribute it fairly, in accordance with the principles of justice, equity, and the law of rights, ensuring it is divided equally among the people.[3]

The equal distribution of public funds was one of the policies that Imam ʿAlī (a) implemented, following the example of Prophet Muḥammad (s), with specific objectives in mind. The changes introduced by the three first caliphs in the Prophet's traditions were difficult for many people to accept, and they often complained to Imam ʿAlī (a). However, the Imam never compromised in his commitment to achieving economic justice and fulfilling divine commandments.

According to hadith sources, once two women, one Arab and the other non-Arab, came to the Imam (a) to receive their share. The Imam (a) gave each of them 25 dirhams and a measure of food. The Arab woman protested, saying, "O Commander of the Faithful, I am from the Arabs, and she is a servant from the non-Arabs. Should we both

1. Rayshahrī, *Mawsūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib* (*a*), 4: 124.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, Letter 53.
3. Rayshahrī, *Mawsūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib* (*a*), 4: 196.

receive the same?" The Imam (a) replied, "In the distribution of these funds, there is no preference between the descendants of Ishmael [that is, Arabs] and those of Isaac [that is, non-Arabs]."[1] This approach can be observed in various other instances of the Imam's practice. For example, in the distribution of certain properties that were owned by specific individuals or groups, he strictly adhered to the legal principles, as seen in his interpretation of verse 7 of Surah al-Ḥashr (59), which we mentioned earlier.

A closer examination of the Imam's statement reveals not only the three categories of ownership but also the factors underlying ownership and its philosophy, which we will address in the context of "social solidarity." Just as the concentration of wealth in the hands of certain groups within the private sector is dangerous, its concentration in the hands of governments can also pose risks, potentially exacerbating class divisions or diminishing the legitimacy of the government. However, by embracing the three types of ownership and implementing appropriate policies, as we will discuss, the conditions for economic balance can be established.

2. Distribution of Wealth and Incomes

In the Islamic economic system, the boundaries and types of ownership are defined with the goal of distributing wealth and income among all segments of society, preventing its concentration in the hands of a particular group. Therefore, income distribution in the Islamic economic system is of particular importance because economic balance, and with it economic justice—which ensures the upholding of the rights of all individuals—cannot be achieved without appropriate distributive policies. As such, the existence of poor and weak classes in an Islamic society is unacceptable. Imam ʿAlī's statements consistently emphasize the importance of ensuring the welfare of the weak and securing their rights. The income distribution policies in Islam are designed in such a way that, when implemented, no one remains impoverished, and everyone enjoys a reasonable standard of living. Imam ʿAlī (a) describes his society, in which distributive policies were properly enacted, as follows: "All the people of Kufa are well-off and living in comfort, such that everyone has access to proper food (wheat bread), adequate housing, and clean water."[2]

Imam ʿAlī's pursuit of justice prevented the violation of the rights of some for the benefit of the wealthy, eradicated poverty from the society, and ensured that the community's income was distributed in a balanced manner among all individuals.

1. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 70; Ḥur al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasā'il*, 2: 431.
2. Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 40: 327.

Clearly, from the Imam's perspective, economic policies—especially distributive policies—must continue until everyone enjoys a reasonable standard of living. This issue holds great significance in the Islamic system, which has established specific rules and regulations for before, during, and after production, in order to guide appropriate policymaking. Ownership or oversight of the distribution of natural resources, such as land, water, minerals, forests, and pastures, is governed by specific regulations (before they are produced and transformed into goods), with clear boundaries and guidelines. The Islamic system prevents these resources from falling into the hands of capitalists and has placed great emphasis on the careful regulation of income redistribution. Due to the importance of this policy, we will examine it further in later discussions, with a focus on Imam ʿAlī's teachings.

3. Creating the Public Sector

Just laws of ownership and fair wealth and income distribution policies alone are not sufficient to achieve economic justice and balance. Rather, the realization of justice requires a just executive authority that enforces distributive policies and implements laws to ensure justice.

In the words and practical conduct of Imam ʿAlī (a), as the just Islamic ruler, we find numerous instances where he clarifies the role of the state, the necessity of establishing a public sector, and its duties and authorities. Long before the emergence of theories advocating for the elimination of the state, he highlighted the dangerous consequences of such ideas. While even strong proponents of the market system today do not advocate for the complete abolition of the state, the Islamic perspective on the necessity of government and the scope of its authority differs fundamentally from theirs. In their view, the public sector exists solely to safeguard individual interests, and their concept of justice is limited to preserving economic freedoms and ensuring equal economic opportunities. In contrast, in the Islamic economic system, the public sector and the state are essential pillars of the system, with the primary duty of enforcing laws and upholding citizens' rights.

While mending his shoe, Imam ʿAlī (a) asked ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās about its worth and then remarked, "By God, it's [...] worth more to me than command over you! That I undertake only to establish truth and fight falsehood!"[1] When lamenting those who turned to Muʿāwiya, he said, "Woe to them! To whom are they turning, and whom are

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 33.

they abandoning? By God, I sought them only to uphold the truth, while others seek them for falsehood and oppression."[1]

He sees the acceptance of outward governance over the people and the establishment of a state as a duty, viewing it as an obligation for upholding the rights of the oppressed, establishing justice, and enforcing divine laws. Thus, he states: "Lord, You know that I do not seek governance or leadership, but rather, my acceptance of it is solely for the purpose of upholding divine laws, implementing rulings, rectifying affairs [i.e., placing everything in its rightful position], ensuring greater public welfare, following the path of the Prophet (s), and guiding those who have gone astray."[2]

His statements on this matter are too numerous to be fully included in this article. We have thus only referenced a few of them. In outlining the necessity of governance and the state, and in response to the Kharijites who, in an attempt to reject governance, chanted "No rule except for God," Imam ʿAlī (a) states: "The statement is true, but the intent is false. Yes, there is no authority save God's, but these people are claiming that there should be no other ruler. In truth, the community must have a ruler, whether pious or wicked, under whose jurisdiction believers do good and disbelievers make merry, till God brings each period to its destined conclusion. Taxes need to be collected, enemies repudiated, highways protected, and rights wrested from the mighty for the weak—all this, until the pious ruler goes to his rest, or the wicked ruler's death allows the community to rest."[3] These words imply that human society cannot achieve its goals without a ruler—even if he is not a Muslim. However, whether a government is just or an unjust non-believing state, it seeks to manage public affairs and maintain social order to preserve its own authority and status. In doing so, it prevents chaos and works to safeguard individual rights from being violated.

The Imam (a) asserts that it is the duty of scholars to prevent the violation of the rights of the oppressed, noting that he himself undertook governance as a means to fulfill this purpose. In his view, God has deemed leadership and imamate necessary, and people must accept it as a fundamental principle—not merely as a response to chaos, rebellion, or strikes for the sake of protecting personal or group interests. Describing governance and leadership, he states: "He has mandated the Imamate as a system of governance for the community, and obedience to the Imam to show the Imamate's lofty status."[4] He then

1. Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 184; Rayshahrī, *Mawsūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib* (*a*), 4: 129.
2. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 20: 299.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 40.
4. Ibid., wisdom 252.

describes his ownrole within the Islamic system as follows: "I should not abandon the main army, the capital city, the public treasury, collection of revenues, dispensation of justice, or oversight of petitioners' rights! I should not ride in one battalion to chase another, shaken about like an arrow shaft in an empty quiver! I am the pivot in the grinding stone. It rotates around me while I remain in my place."[1]

The Imam (a) not only underscores the central role of the Imam and the pivotal function of leadership, but also outlines the duties of a ruler, such as preparing military forces, urban administration, economic affairs, public treasury management, state finances, and the judiciary and legislative branches—each of which cannot be fulfilled without the existence of a government. Furthermore, in his instructions to his appointed governors of various cities and provinces, as well as to the rulers of Islamic territories, he has mentioned additional responsibilities, painting a lofty vision of Islamic governance. By closely examining the duties assigned to rulers and political leaders in his statements, we can discern their common element: establishing economic balance within the Islamic society and ensuring social solidarity to achieve social justice.

B. Social Solidarity

In the first approach to achieving economic justice, we emphasized the necessity of just laws and fair enforcers who, through appropriate policies, prevent class divisions and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a select few. In other words, we identified the essential tools for realizing economic justice and briefly explored Imam ʿAlī's perspectives on this matter. In the second approach—social solidarity (*takāful* or mutual guarantee)—we focus on the mechanisms outlined in his teachings that utilize these tools to establish justice in practice.

Undoubtedly, individuals in society are neither identical nor entirely equal. Some possess exceptional physical abilities and talents, while others are weaker. Consequently, income levels in any society vary according to individual capabilities, and some may not earn enough for a livelihood. This section explores Imam ʿAlī's perspective on addressing the needs of the ill, individuals with physical and mental disabilities, the bankrupt, the incapable, the unemployed, and, more broadly, the "needy." Do these segments of society have any rights, and how are those rights fulfilled? Here, the focus is on the mechanisms for securing the rights of the needy and the just approach to dealing with them. Imam ʿAlī (a) categorizes the various social classes as follows:

1. Ibid., sermon 119.

> "Know that the subject population consists of categories of people, each category sustained by the others and in need of the others. The categories are these: soldiers who fight in God's cause, scribes who write for the public or for the elite, judges who dispense justice, administrators who work with equity and compassion, members of the protected peoples and the conquered who have converted to Islam and who pay the poll tax and land tax, merchants and arti- sans, and the lowest category, the poor and needy. God has prescribed a role for each, drawing boundaries through the laws mandated in his Book and in the practice of his Prophet (s). This is a covenant from him, one that we preserve."[1]

After enumerating the classes and individuals within society, Imam ʿAlī (a) outlines the role of each and instructs the governor of Egypt that every group has rights that must be upheld. He strongly urges the governor to attend to the weaker segments of society and to uphold the rights that God has ordained for them:

> "Beware God's wrath, and never, ever forsake the people of the lowest strata who have no means—the poor, the destitute, the wretched, the suffering, and the disabled. In this category, too, are the beggar and the suppliant. Protect their rights for the sake of God, for he has entrusted them to you. Set aside for them a share from the common treasury and, in every town, a share from the produce of public lands won in battle by the Muslim army. The indigent in far-off lands have the same right as those who live near you; you are responsible for securing the rights of all. Do not let any kind of pomp and ceremony distract you from attending to the needy. You will not be excused for neglecting small petitions, even if you attend assiduously to the large and important ones. Do not repudiate your solicitude for the poor or avert your face from them in contempt. Keep a check on the welfare of those who do not have direct access to you, people whom eyes disdain and men scorn."[2]

The key difference between Imam ʿAlī's perspective and that of some proponents of other economic systems, such as capitalism, lies in that, according to the Islamic view, the disadvantaged classes have an inherent right to support. A specific mechanism is established to ensure they receive the necessary financial resources and moral support. In contrast, some in capitalist systems have formally advocated for neglecting these individuals.

Herbert Spencer, in advancing the concept of "survival of the fittest," asserts that the duty of the economically strong is to eliminate the economically weak from existence.

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1. Ibid., letter 53.
2. Ibid.

Social welfare measures not only fail to alleviate suffering but actually prolong and intensify human misery. As the population continues to grow, ultimately, all will perish from starvation.[1]

Thomas Malthus considers compassion for the poor an unforgivable mistake, stating that those who already possess the world have the right to enjoy its benefits, and if they are misguided enough to show mercy to the hungry poor, they will soon face the consequences of their error.[2] Thus, when it comes to securing livelihoods and supporting the disadvantaged, we encounter two distinct perspectives:

1. The Disadvantaged Should Be Left to Their Fate to Perish

According to this view, the disadvantaged have no share in society's incomes, and their existence is deemed superfluous. Malthus believes that when a person is born into a world already occupied by others, if they cannot obtain sustenance from their parents—their primary source of provision—and society has no need for their labor, then they have no right whatsoever to demand food from society; in reality, they are excess to requirements.[3] He further argues that showing compassion to such individuals would only encourage others to partake in this "betrayal," ultimately leading to food shortages. This is because natural resources are neither renewable nor abundant. Other theorists within capitalist systems have echoed a diluted version of this perspective. At most, they advocate for social welfare as a means to safeguard the interests of the wealthy and prevent rebellion and disorder—yet even they do not recognize any inherent rights for the impoverished.

2. The Needy Have Rights

Ensuring the rights of the needy requires assessing their needs, securing financial resources, and establishing a support mechanism. Some have mistakenly assumed that such a system merely redistributes poverty within society. However, according to Imam ʿAlī (a), when implemented in accordance with established laws and regulations, this mechanism not only eradicates poverty and deprivation but also contributes to societal development and prosperity. Beyond fostering a sense of security among citizens and assuring them of support during times of hardship, aiding the needy can also integrate them into the labor market and production sector. Their participation in the economy promotes healthy competition, which not only increases the volume of production but

1. Thurow, *Āyanda-yi sarmāya-dārī*, 313.
2. Arblaster, *Ẓuhūr wa siqūṭ-i Libirālism*, 274.
3. Daftar-i Hamkārī-yi Ḥawza wa Dānishgāh, *Mabānī-yi iqtiṣād-i Islāmī*, 152-53.

also enhances its quality. Reflecting on Imam ʿAlī's statements, one can recognize both the right to life and the right to livelihood as fundamental entitlements of individuals in society.

First: The right to life. Under normal circumstances, all individuals have the right to live and sustain their existence, for they are creations of God, and the natural resources and blessings of the world have been provided for all. Thus, everyone is entitled to benefit from this right. Naturally, people secure their livelihood and access to nature's resources through their own efforts while adhering to the laws and principles of social life. However, provisions must be made for those who are unable to work, lack sufficient savings, or face unforeseen hardships such as illness, orphanhood, famine, or unemployment, preventing them from earning a sufficient livelihood. From Imam ʿAlī's perspective—inspired by Quranic teachings—in such cases, the needy are entitled to a share of the wealth of the affluent. Alternatively, if the Islamic government possesses adequate resources, it is responsible for ensuring their survival.

More clearly put, those in need have a rightful share in the wealth of the rich and the public treasury. The Imam (a) states: "God has mandated food for the poor from the wealth of the rich. Whenever a poor man goes hungry, it is because a rich man has refused to give, and God will surely hold him accountable."[1] This right is mentioned in certain Quranic verses as well: "and there is a known share in whose wealth for the beggar and the deprived" (Q 70:24-25). This verse has been interpreted[2] as suggesting that what is obligatory upon the wealthy is to uphold the right to life of their fellow humans, especially those who share their faith, ensuring they do not perish. This right is distinct from other financial obligations imposed on the wealthy, such as mandatory almsgiving (e.g., *khums* and *zakat*). Therefore, if the financial resources of the Islamic state are insufficient or if such a state is not established, it becomes the duty of the wealthy to assist their fellow humans and fulfill their rights.

In another hadith from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), the poor are considered partners of the wealthy: "Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has established a partnership between the rich and the poor in wealth; therefore, it is not permissible for the wealthy to divert wealth away from their rightful partners."[3] It can be said that the philosophy behind public wealth and its ownership by all citizens is to uphold this right. However, to fulfill this obligation, the Islamic state may utilize other resources, or the wealthy themselves are

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 328.
2. Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Mīzān*, 18: 401.
3. Ḥur al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil*, 6: 150.

required to spend from their personal assets. A testament to this principle is an incident involving Imam ʿAlī (a). He saw an elderly, disabled man begging and asked those around him, "Who is he?" They replied, "He is a Christian." The Imam then rebuked them, saying, "You used him for labor until he became old and weak, and now you abandon him? Provide for him from the public treasury."[1]

Based on these hadiths, the right to life is an undeniable principle in the view of Imam ʿAlī (a) and the Islamic economic system. Therefore, the poor and destitute cannot be abandoned to perish. A more important question concerns the extent of care and support for these individuals. Should they be provided with more than the bare minimum needed for survival? The answer to this lies in another right that they possess.

Second: The right to livelihood. Imam ʿAlī (a) states: "God has made it obligatory upon the wealthy to spend from their wealth according to the needs of the poor. Therefore, if the poor remain hungry or without clothing, it is due to the withholding of wealth by the rich, and God will hold them accountable and punish them."[2] The phrase "according to the needs of the poor" in Imam ʿAlī's words, along with similar expressions from other Imams (a), affirms the right to a decent livelihood for all citizens. This means that no individual in society should live below the general standard of living, as justice demands no less than this. This principle can also be inferred from Imam ʿAlī's description of Kufa, where not only was everyone ensured the right to life, but they also enjoyed a decent standard of living, including access to wheat bread, water from the Euphrates, and adequate shelter. A similar notion is drawn from verses 118 and 119 of Surah Ṭāhā (20).[3] Allameh Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1981) interprets these verses, explaining: "The hardship that God warned Adam about—saying that if he were expelled from Paradise, he would suffer—refers to the struggles of life on earth in obtaining clothing, shelter, food, and water. In Paradise, he had no need for any of these."[4]

Therefore, "social solidarity" is a duty that binds everyone, including the Islamic state, to eliminate poverty from society. For this reason, religious leaders have permitted the use of *zakat* to meet people's basic and customary needs. Ibn Baṣīr once asked Imam al-Ṣādiq (a): "If someone has a large family and their income does not exceed a certain amount, can they benefit from zakat, which is the right of the poor?" The Imam (a)

1. Rayshahrī, *Mawsūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib* (*a*), 4: 204.
2. Ibid., 4: 203.
3. "You will neither be hungry in it nor naked. You will neither be thirsty in it, nor suffer from [the heat of] the sun."
4. Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Mīzān*, 14: 220.

replied: "They may use zakat to improve their food and clothing until they reach the general level of living in society."[1]

These hadiths also indicate that poverty is a broad, relative, and extensive concept, defined in each era based on the average standard of living in society. Therefore, poverty alleviation and care for the poor—duties shared by both the people and the Islamic state—must continue until a relative level of well-being is ensured for all. Economic justice guarantees this baseline level of welfare while also allowing for greater prosperity, provided it does not lead to heedlessness of God. If this minimum standard is not met, it indicates a failure in implementing justice. As Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) states: "How vast is justice! Indeed, whenever justice is established among the people, they become self-sufficient."[2] Similarly, Imam al-Kāẓim (a) asserts: "If justice prevails among the people, they will no longer be in need."[3]

Obstacles to Achieving Economic Justice

Among the factors that undermine economic justice—issues to which Imam ʿAlī (a) paid special attention—are usury (illicit profit), hoarding, price gouging, fraud, and the like. Given their oppressive nature, these actions are prohibited in the Islamic economic system and were prohibited in the words of Imam ʿAlī (a).

1. Usury

Imam ʿAlī (a), consistently warned people against the severe consequences of usurious transactions and interest-based dealings in society. According to Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), Imam ʿAlī (a) had a regular practice of visiting the markets of Kufa every morning. Upon arriving at each market, he would proclaim:

> "O merchants, fear God!" (When the people heard his voice, they would pause their work, listen attentively, and respectfully heed his words.) "First, seek goodness from God. Ask for His blessings by showing lenience to your customers. Be patient and adorn yourselves with forbearance. Refrain from swearing oaths and do not lie. Abandon oppression and treat the oppressed with justice. Do not engage in usury, do not sell underweight, do not diminish people's rights, and do not spread corruption on the earth."[4]

1. Ḥur al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil*, 6: 159.
2. Ibid., 11: 116.
3. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 524.
4. Ḥur al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil*, 12: 428.

Usury undoubtedly leads to oppression and injustice. Thus, the Quran states: "And if you repent, then you will have your principal, neither harming others, nor suffering harm." (Q 2:279). In this verse, God commands the believers to relinquish any remaining usurious gains in their wealth. Otherwise, it is as if they have declared war against God and His Messenger (s). However, if they repent, their original capital remains theirs, ensuring that they neither commit injustice nor suffer injustice.

In the Islamic economic system, usury is strongly opposed, as its detrimental effects gradually permeate all aspects of the economy. Usury hinders the realization of justice and the elimination of oppression, which are fundamental aims of the system and its leaders. Al-Aṣbagh b. Nubāta narrates: I heard the Commander of the Faithful (a) say from the pulpit:

> "O merchants, learn the rules and manners of trade before engaging in it." (He repeated this three times.) "And know that usury creeps among people subtly—its movement is even more inconspicuous than an ant treading on a black stone. Uphold your faith with honesty and truthfulness. Be aware that merchants are at risk of injustice and corruption, and the corrupt are in the Fire [divine punishment]—except for those who observe justice and refrain from wrongdoing."[1]

Islam's emphasis on economic justice and the detrimental impact of usury and usurious transactions have led to its being regarded as a declaration of war against God and His Messenger (s), with those involved in it being subject to the curse and condemnation of God, the Prophet, and the Imams. Imam ʿAlī (a) narrates that the Prophet (s) not only cursed the usurer but also the one who pays interest, the seller and buyer of usurious goods, the witnesses to such transactions, and the scribes who record them.[2] In another statement, he says: "In the punishment decreed for the usurer, intermediaries, record keepers, and witnesses are all equal."[3]

The injustice of usury is evident in light of the preceding discussions. Beyond eroding the spirit of brotherhood and selflessness among believers, it leads to the concentration of wealth in the hands of a select few—those who abandon productive and beneficial economic activities in favor of usury and monetary exploitation. Thus, in the words of

1. Ibid., 12: 282.
2. Ibid., 12: 430.
3. Ibid.

the infallible leaders, the wisdom behind the prohibition of usury lies in encouraging engagement in legitimate economic endeavors[1] and fostering moral virtues.[2]

2. Hoarding

Another factor that disrupts the balance of supply and demand, leading to price hikes, economic insecurity, and ultimately hindering economic justice, is hoarding—the practice of stockpiling essential goods needed by the people. Jurists have identified specific instances of the essential goods in their fatwas or legal rulings.

One of the duties of an Islamic government is to prevent hoarding so that pricing mechanisms—aligned with supply and demand and the policies implemented by the state—can regulate production levels and ensure fair prices. After addressing some of the spirits of merchants and industrialists, the Imam advises Mālik al-Ashtar: "Forbid hoarding, for the Messenger (s) forbade it. Ensure that trading is peaceful, scales are balanced, and prices are set at levels that harm neither buyer nor seller. If someone dares to hoard after you have publicly forbidden it, make an example of him and punish him, but here, too, not in excess."[3]

The Imam's words imply that hoarding obstructs the realization of justice. Prices that yield excessive profits for one party while causing undue hardship for the other are unjust, as they fail to uphold the rights of both sides. His statement also seems to acknowledge price regulation under government supervision, and the opposition to hoarding is based on its distortion of the pricing system. Thus, in another hadith, the Imam states: "The Messenger of God came across some hoarders and commanded them to bring their stored goods to the market and make them visible to the people. Someone requested the Prophet to set a price for the hoarded items, but signs of displeasure appeared on his face, and he said: 'How can I set a price while prices are in the hands of God? If He wills, He raises them, and if He wills, He lowers them.'"[4]

The Prophet (s) only commanded that the hoarded goods be made available for sale and visible to the people; he refused to set prices for them. This was because if a shortage in supply had occurred, exposing the hoarded goods would naturally resolve the deficiency, allowing fair prices to be determined through the pricing mechanism, ensuring that goods were sold at just rates. However, if the shortage was due to other

1. Ibid., 12: 424.
2. Ibid., 12: 425.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 53.
4. Ḥur al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasā'il*, 12: 317.

factors—such as drought, excessive demand caused by war, changes in export levels, and the like—then price increases would be a natural consequence. In such cases, imposing a price contrary to market conditions would be deemed unjust. For this reason, the Prophet (s) did not set prices but opposed hoarding, as it disrupted the natural course of economic activity. Hoarding stemmed from greed and the pursuit of personal gain by merchants and producers, and if left unchecked, it would undermine economic justice.

Imam ʿAlī (a) frequently highlights the human tendency toward greed when individuals lack proper Islamic upbringing or are not under the supervision of an Islamic government. For instance, he writes in a letter to the governor of Egypt: "Next: Be good to merchants and artisans and instruct your officers to be good to them as well … Know also, however, that many mer- chants can be excessively stingy and monstrously avaricious. They hoard grain and fix prices. These things harm the common people and stain the reputation of rulers."[1]

Based on the Imam's words, traits such as miserliness and monopolistic tendencies do not permit absolute economic freedom. The potential collusion between industrialists, merchants, and rulers to manipulate prices for their own benefit obstructs the establishment of a truly free economy and leads to public harm. Indeed, such individuals are more likely to neglect God and His commandments, as well as rebel against Him and the people. The Quran states:"Indeed man becomes rebellious when he considers himself without need." (Q 96:6-7) Imam ʿAlī (a) likewise warns: "Whoever acquires wealth must beware of corruption and its improper use."[2]

3. Discrimination

All people are equal before the law; therefore, one cannot favor a white person over a black person, the knowledgeable over the unlearned, or interpret the law to benefit a particular faction or group. The only standard for virtue and superiority is piety or God-wariness: "Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most Godwary among you" (Q 49:13). Therefore, discrimination is unjust where all individuals have equal rights. In his letter to Mālik al-Ashtar, Imam ʿAlī (a) advises: "Beware of appropriating property to which the common people possess an equal right"[3] The Imam's words imply that in certain rights, all people are equal, and no one is entitled to a greater share than others. Accordingly, in another letter to Miqṣala b. Hubayra al-Shaybānī, he writes: "I am

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 53.
2. Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, 1: 75.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 53.

informed that you have done something, which, if you have done it, means that you have angered your Lord and enraged your Imam. I am informed that you distribute among your ingratiating Bedouin tribesmen the war booty won by the Muslims' arms, their cavalry, and their blood … Hark! All Muslims—those who live in your jurisdiction and those who live in mine—have equal share in the war booty. They come to my watering hole to receive it, and leave, having drunk their fill."[1]

The Imam (a) regarded discrimination in the distribution of *fayʾ* (spoils) as unjust. Thus, in explaining the verse on *fayʾ* (Q 59:7),[2] he stated: "Like the Prophet (s), I distributed the spoils equally so that it would not circulate exclusively among the wealthy, like a ball passed from one hand to another."[3] He then wrote a letter on this matter, stating: "I have learned that men from your town are stealing out to join Muʿāwiya … They personally experienced my justice—they saw it, heard it, understood it, and realized that all are equal before me in claiming their rights—and they fled from this toward nepotism! Let them go far away and yet farther!"[4]

Just as discrimination in a judge's treatment of both parties in a dispute is unjust, so too is any form of discrimination in matters where all individuals have equal rights, as it contradicts economic justice. The Imam (a) firmly opposed those who challenged the equal rights established by God. Thus, he said to Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr—two companions of the Prophet (s) who were regarded as esteemed figures among the people: "My equal distribution of treasury funds is a matter neither of personal decision nor whim, but I have found this—and you know it too—to be the ruling brought and decided by God's Messenger (s)."[5]

Given the perspective of Imam ʿAlī (a) that we have presented, any deviation from a rightful law—one that is deemed just because of its rightfulness—can be considered an obstacle to the realization of justice. In other words, anything that is not a rightful claim and is instead an act of oppression serves as a barrier to justice.

4. Tyrannical Rule and Oppressive Rulers

Beyond laws, which can play a significant role in ensuring justice or perpetuating injustice, the realization of justice is impossible without just enforcers. In general, the

1. Ibid., letter 43.
2. "He spoils that Allah gave to His Apostle from the people of the townships, are for Allah and the Apostle, the relatives and the orphans, the needy and the traveller, so that they do not circulate among the rich among you."
3. Rayshahrī, *Mawsūʿat al-Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib* (*a*), 4: 124.
4. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 70.
5. Ibid., sermon 205.

very purpose of governance is to establish justice and prevent oppression. Thus, Imam ʿAlī (a) advises rulers and those responsible for administering justice to beware lest their desires lead them to act unjustly, for all people—especially those with greater power and financial means—are at risk of injustice and appropriating the rights of others for themselves:

> "Next: A ruler has intimates and courtiers who often misappropriate, transgress, or commit acts of injustice. Check their rise by cutting off their access to such acts. Do not award land grants to any of your retinue or relatives. Do not raise their hopes for an estate, because in their exercise of ownership they might harm a neighboring estate's water supply, or there may be common services whose burden they pass on to others. If you award them such grants, the benefits will be theirs and the blame will be yours, in this world and the next."[1]

The Imam (a) counts desires and passions of rulers as one of the obstacles to economic justice and urges them to refrain from succumbing to their whims, lest they stray from the path of justice. In a letter to al-Aswad b. Qaṭība, he writes:

> "A ruler's passions, if they lean in one direction, prevent him from dispensing justice. Let the rights of all people be equal in your eyes, for injustice is never defensible. Stay away from actions you would find deplorable if directed at you. Hope for God's reward and fear his punishment, and exert yourself to undertake his charge … Remember: Nothing can release you from the obligation to do what is right, especially the charge to protect your soul, and to safeguard your subjects to the best of your ability. If you do, the benefit that will come to you is greater than the benefit that will come to them through you."[2]

The Imam (a) explicitly regards following one's desires as an impediment to justice. Thus, he advises adherence to divine laws and cautions against unjust actions to avoid their consequences. This safeguard is achieved through upholding the rights of the people and ensuring justice. Alongside urging rulers to cultivate self-development, he emphasizes the appointment of competent officials and fair governors:

> "O people, you know that one who is in charge of marriage contracts, penalties for murder, distribution of war gains, legal rulings, and leadership of the Muslims should not be a miser or his greed would target their property, he should not be ignorant or he would lead them astray, he should not be harsh or he would alienate them, he should not be a tyrant or he would favor one group over another,

1. Ibid., letter 53.
2. Ibid., letter 59.

he should not be corrupt or he would squander rights and be unjust in the distribution of stipends, and he should not be a person who obstructs the Sunnah or the community would perish."[1]

5. People's Failure to Uphold the Ruler's Rights

In addition to emphasizing the responsibilities of rulers and governors in upholding justice and protecting rights, the Imam does not overlook the obligations of the people. He eloquently addresses this reciprocal relationship in Sermon 216, for economic justice can only be realized when rights are upheld comprehensively: "For subjects will not be righteous except when their ruler is righteous, and a ruler will not be righteous except when his subjects are steadfast. If subjects render the ruler his rights and the ruler renders them theirs, truth will become strong, the ways of religion will be established, the waymarks of justice will be fixed, and the road of the Sunnah will become easy to follow"[2]

In this sermon, the Imam (a) addresses all relevant aspects, extending his advice beyond governors to the people as well, urging them to uphold the foundations of justice through proper Islamic upbringing. His words also reflect adherence to laws and regulations, ensuring that by acting upon just laws, all factors contributing to justice are upheld, while the roots of injustice and oppression are eradicated.

Conclusion

This study focuses on justice within the realm of social sciences, particularly as it pertains to laws and social relations, particularly economic relations. In examining economic justice—primarily revolving around fair distribution while considering natural differences among individuals—due regard is given to legitimate private ownership alongside Imam ʿAlī's views on addressing the needs of low-income and disadvantaged groups. Imam ʿAlī (a) regards economic justice as a fundamental goal, accepting governance for its establishment and the restoration of the rights of the oppressed.

The Imam (a) explicitly enumerates the rights of the people, particularly the underprivileged segments of society, urging governors to uphold them. At the same time, he reminds the people of the rights of their rulers. He considers the mutual observance of these rights as a means to achieving social order, sustaining the Islamic government, discouraging adversaries and foreign powers, increasing blessings, fostering societal prosperity, promoting moral refinement and reform, strengthening harmony between

1. Ibid., sermon 131.
2. Ibid., sermon 216.

the people and the state, and preventing the distortion of religion. From his perspective, justice is the criterion for the legitimacy of laws, institutions, and structures, holding primacy over them. His words suggest that efficiency and development are compatible with the realization of social justice, thereby challenging prevalent views that prioritize development and efficiency over justice.

The Imam's words and conduct indicate that the realization of justice depends on just laws, proper upbringing, faith in spiritual values, and the presence of fair enforcers free from selfish desires. With these conditions fulfilled, it becomes possible to plan for economic balance and social solidarity.

The policy of economic balance aims to prevent the concentration of wealth within a particular group and the formation of monopolies. This policy is pursued through the delineation of property rights, the regulation of wealth distribution methods, and the responsibilities assigned to the public sector, all of which work in harmony to establish economic equilibrium.

Social solidarity (or mutual guarantee) goes beyond social welfare or security, which all modern systems deem necessary. In addition to meeting basic needs and necessities of life to prevent death and destruction, it ensures a relative level of well-being for all. The distinction of the policy of social solidarity in Islam, compared to other systems, lies in the provision of financial resources—its sources being clearly defined—and in its moral obligation, rather than being undertaken by societies out of compulsion. Accordingly, two rights are recognized for people: (1) The right to life, and (2) the right to sustenance.

According to Imam ʿAlī (a), the obstacles to achieving economic justice can be summarized in five categories: (1) usury, (2) hoarding, (3) discrimination, (4) tyrannical governance and oppressive rulers, and (5) the people's failure to uphold the rights of the ruler.

III. Selected Hadiths

Intellect and Reflection

1. Intellect is like a concealing cover, and virtue is like a manifest beauty. Therefore, conceal the flaws of your character with your virtue, and fight your desires with your intellect, so that kindness may be granted to you and affection may be shown to you.[1]

2. The wise person has [several characteristics]: religion is their way of life, forbearance is their nature, and foresight is their disposition. When asked, they answer; when they speak, they speak correctly; when they listen, they understand; when they narrate, they are truthful; and when someone trusts them, they are loyal.[2]

3. There is no wealth more profitable than intelligence, no solitude more desolate than vanity.[3]

4. Awaken your heart with reflection, keep your body away from bed at night, and be mindful of God.[4]

5. Reflection on anything other than wisdom is mere desire.[5]

6. Thinking leads [one] to righteousness and its practice.[6]

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1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 20.
2. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 1: 116.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, Wisdom 113.
4. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 54.
5. Āmidī, Ghurar al-ḥikam, 68.
6. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 55.

7. Seize wisdom wherever you find it. A wise maxim may reside in the breast of a hypocrite, and it quivers and trembles there until it settles next to its kin, in the breast of a believer.[1]

8. The wise, the learned, the pious, and the righteous used to write only these three things, and there was no fourth for them: Whoever makes their inner self good for God, God will make their outer self good; whoever rectifies [the relationship] between themselves and God, God will rectify [the relationship] between them and others; whoever has the Hereafter as their concern, God will relieve them of the concerns of this world.[2]

Knowledge and Its Acquisition

1. O people, know that the perfection of religion lies in seeking knowledge and acting upon it. Know that seeking knowledge is more incumbent upon you than seeking worldly wealth, for worldly wealth is guaranteed for you. Indeed, a just distributor has undertaken its distribution and has guaranteed it for you, and [undoubtedly] it will reach you. [But] knowledge is hidden and stored with its possessors, and you are called upon to seek it from the learned, so pursue it.[3]

2. Acquire knowledge, for learning it is a good deed, seeking it is worship, searching for it is striving in the cause of God, teaching it to those who do not know it is charity, and providing it for its people is a means of drawing closer to God.[4]

3. The first step in acquiring knowledge is silence, the second is listening attentively, the third is disseminating knowledge, and the fourth is acting upon it.[5]

4. Knowledge is of two kinds: knowledge that people have no choice but to learn, which is the learning of the [laws of] Islam; and knowledge that people are not obligated to learn, which is [understanding] the power of God Almighty.[6]

5. It is enough for you, from knowledge, to fear God Almighty, and it is enough for you, from ignorance, to be arrogant about your intellect [or knowledge].[7]

6. O seeker of knowledge, truly the learned have three signs: knowledge, self-restraint, and silence. The pretender to knowledge also has three signs: he rebels against those

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, Wisdom 79.
2. Ibn al-Ashʿath, *al-Jaʿfariyyāt*, 236.
3. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 30.
4. Ibn Shiʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 28.
5. Ibn al-Ashʿath, *al-Jaufariyyāt*, 232.
6. Hilālī, *K. Sulaym*, 2: 954.
7. Warrām, *Tanbīh al-khawāṭir*, 2: 78.

above him through disobedience, he oppresses those below him through dominance and mastery, and he supports the oppressors.[1]

7. Know this: Men rooted in knowledge do not attempt to force themselves through fortified barricades but accept the veiled mysteries whose details they lack as they are presented to them. They admit their inability to grasp things beyond their compass, which God praises them for, and he calls their abstention—the abstention from delving into things whose essence he has not burdened them with investigating—deep knowledge.[2]

8. No scholar dies except that a part of their knowledge is lost with them. Indeed, scholars among people are like the moon in the sky, its light prevailing over the light of other stars. Acquire knowledge from wherever you wish, but beware of learning it for three traits: to boast about it to scholars, to argue with fools using it, to show off with it in gatherings, or to attract people's attention to yourself with the intention of presiding over them.[3]

9. Indeed, among the rights of the learned is that you do not ask them excessive questions, and you do not grab their clothing [and insist] [when asking]. When you enter upon them while a group is with them, greet them all, and give the scholar a special greeting [and respect]. Sit facing them, and do not sit behind them. [When speaking with them] do not wink or point with your hand, and do not gossip about so-and-so and so-and-so disagreeing with their opinion. Do not be annoyed by prolonged sitting with them, for the example of a scholar is like that of a palm tree; you await it until something falls down to you from it. A scholar has a greater reward than one who constantly fasts, stays up at night in worship, and always strives in the cause of God.[4]

10. Know that accompanying a scholar [of religion] and following him is a religion by which God is worshipped. Obeying him is a means of attaining good deeds and purifying sins, a treasure [of goodness] for the believers, a source of pride in life, and a good memory after their death.[5]

11. These are ʿAlī's words to Kumayl b. Ziyād al-Nakhaʿī: "Kumayl, these hearts are like vessels, and the best are those that best receive and store. Take heed of what I am about to tell you. There are three types of people: those with divine learning, apprentices who

1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 37.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 91.
3. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 229-30.
4. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 37.
5. Ibid., 1: 188.

walk the path of salvation, and the ignorant rabble, followers of any bleating fool, who sway with every wind, seeking neither illumination from the light of knowledge, nor support from a sturdy column. Kumayl, knowledge is better than wealth: knowledge protects you, whereas you must protect wealth, wealth decreases with spending, whereas knowledge increases when you distribute it, and the benefits of wealth cease with its ceasing. Kumayl, knowledge is a faith to be followed: it earns a man obedience during his lifetime,5 and leaves a beautiful legacy of remembrance after his death—and knowledge rules, whereas wealth is ruled over. Kumayl, those who hoard wealth are dead even as they live, whereas the learned remain for as long as the world remains—their persons may be lost, but their teachings live on in the hearts of men. Truly, abundant knowledge is housed here (signaling to his breast), if only I could find bearers for it! But no! I encounter clever students who are not trustworthy, who use the instrument of religion for worldly benefit, who attempt to use God's favors to attack his servants, and his proofs to gain victory over his select. I encounter others who have been guided to the bearers of truth but have no real perception—doubt is kindled in their hearts by the first appearance of misgivings. Hark, neither is to be countenanced! There is a third type, enamored of carnal pleasures, easily led to passions, or yet another, in thrall to hoarding and collecting. Neither is mindful of religion. In fact, they are closest to grazing cattle. This is how knowledge dies, through the death of its bearers. But no, by God! There will always be a person on earth who upholds God's proof—whether visible and known or fearful and concealed—for God's proof can never be overthrown. How many are they, and where? By God, they are few in number, but great in stature! Through them God protects his proof, until they entrust it to others like them, sowing it in the hearts of their peers. Knowledge has led them to real perception, enabling them to touch the spirit of certainty, to deem easy what the dissolute find difficult, and take comfort in what the ignorant find miserable. In this world they live in bodies whose spirits are linked to the highest abode. They are God's vicegerents on his earth, who call to his religion. Ah! Would that I could see them."[1]

12. Shall I tell you about a jurist who is truly a jurist? [A true jurist] is one who does not make people lose hope in God's mercy, does not make them feel safe from God's punishment, does not give them permission to commit sins against God, and does not abandon the Quran in pursuit of something else.[2]

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 147.
2. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 36.

13. The slip of a scholar is like the sinking of a ship; it drowns and causes others to drown.[1]

14. Know that there is no good in knowledge devoid of seeking understanding [of truth and reality], and no good resides in reciting [the Quran] without contemplation, and there is no benefit in worship devoid of reflection.[2]

15. If the bearers of knowledge had carried it rightfully [and fulfilled its right], God, His angels, and His obedient creatures would have loved them. But they took knowledge in pursuit of the world [and made it a means to achieve their desires], so God hated them, and they became insignificant in the eyes of the people.[3]

Faith

1. They asked Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (a): "What makes faith firm?" He said: "Piety." They said: "What removes it?" He said: "Greed."[4]

2. Faith has four pillars: contentment with divine decree, trust in God, entrusting affairs to God, and submission to the divine command.[5]

3. None of you will taste the flavor of faith until they know that what has reached them could never have missed them [and was bound to reach them], and what they have been deprived of could never have possibly reached them.[6]

4. Indeed, God has servants whose hearts have been broken by the awe of God, so they refrain from speaking, though they are eloquent, articulate, intelligent, and noble. They hasten toward Him with righteous deeds, never considering any deed too great for His sake, nor content with offering too little. They regard themselves as sinners, while in reality they are the wise and the righteous.[7]

5. A believer is one whose income is lawful and good, whose character is pleasant, and whose inner self is righteous and truthful. They spend from the excess of their wealth, refrain from excessive speech, protect people from their harm, and treat others with fairness.[8]

6. A believer shows his joy in his face and hides his sorrow in his heart.[9]

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1. Karājakī, *Kanz al-fawāʾid*, 1: 319.
2. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 36.
3. Ibn Shuʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 201.
4. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 289-90.
5. Warrām, *Tanbīh al-khawāṭir*, 2: 184.
6. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 58.
7. Kūfī al-Ahwāzī, *al-Zuhd*, 5.
8. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 2: 351-52.
9. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 333.

7. A believer is hardworking and makes few mistakes.[1]

8. A believer socializes with others. There is no good in one who neither socializes with others nor is friendly with them.[2]

9. Three things bring tranquility to a believer: meeting with friends and brethren [in faith], providing food for those breaking their fast, and engaging in intimate conversation in the stillness of the night.[3]

The Qurʾān

1. Know also that the Qurʾān is a counselor that never deceives, a guide that never leads astray, and a speaker that never lies. Whoever sits down with this Qurʾān gets up with either an increase or a decrease: an increase of guidance or a decrease of blindness. Know, furthermore, that no person will remain poor after accepting the Qurʾān and that no person will be wealthy before accepting it. Seek its cure for your ailments and its support against your hard- ships, for it holds the cure for the greatest ailments of all—unbelief, hypocrisy, gross error, and miscreance. Beseech God through its sanctity and turn to him through your love for it. Do not misuse it to seek favors from God's creatures. Nothing equals the Qurʾān in helping you to turn to God. Know, too, that the Qurʾān is an intercessor that is heeded and a speaker that is believed. Those for whom it intercedes on judgment day will have their plea accepted, while those it accuses on judgment day will have the claim against them upheld. Indeed, a crier will cry out on judgment day: "Hark! Every tiller's crop and all the fruits of his labor have been destroyed, except that of the tillers of the Qurʾān!" Be, therefore, among the Qurʾān's tillers and followers! Secure it as the guide to your Lord, accept it as a counselor who restrains your appetites, and distrust any of your opinions that contradict its teachings. Learn from the Qurʾān and know that your passions deceive.[4]

2. In the testament of Amīr al-Muʾminīn (a) to his companions, it is stated: "Know that the Qurʾān is a guide for the day and a light in the dark night, against all hardship and deprivation."[5]

3. Hold fast to God's Book: it is the strong rope, the clear light, the effectual cure, the quencher of thirst, the adherent's protection, and the devotee's salvation; it never becomes crooked and needs straightening, or deviates and needs to be forced back; it is

1. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, 79.
2. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 102.
3. Ibn al-Ashʿath, *al-Jaʿfariyyāt*, 231.
4. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 176.
5. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 600.

not worn out by the tongue's recitation or frayed by the ear's audition—whoever affirms it speaks the truth, whoever acts upon it wins.[1]

4. Learn the Qurʾān, for it is the heart's springtime. Heal yourselves by its light, for it is a cure for souls. And recite it beautifully, for it is the most beneficial exhortation. A learned man who acts contrary to his learning is as bad as the ignorant and perplexed man who never wakes from his stupor. In fact, the case against him is stronger, his anguish more binding, and his culpability greater before God.[2]

5. The Qurʾān was revealed in three parts: one part concerning us and our enemies, one part comprising parables and examples, and one part on inheritance and legal rulings.[3]

6. A house where the Qurʾān is recited and the remembrance of God is maintained will increase in blessings, be frequented by angels, be abandoned by devils, and shine brightly for the inhabitants of the heavens, just as the stars illuminate the people of Earth. However, a house where the Qurʾān is not recited and the remembrance of God is absent will decrease in blessings, be devoid of angels, and become a dwelling for devils.[4]

Worship

1. Fill yourself with God's remembrance for it is the best remembrance.[5]

2. Staying up at night [in worship] is the paradise of those who yearn [for God].[6]

3. Staying up at night [for worship] not only brings about physical health but also earns God's pleasure, perpetuates the practices of divine prophets, and places one in the realm of God's mercy.[7]

4. For the person praying... there are angels surrounding him from his feet up to the highest reaches of the sky, and goodness is poured upon him from his head to his feet. And there is an angel on his right and an angel on his left. If he turns away (looks around), the Lord, the Blessed and Exalted, says: "O son of Adam, do you turn away to something better than Me? If the praying person knew whom he is intimately conversing with, he would not turn away."[8]

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1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 156.
2. Ibid., sermon 110.
3. ʿAyyāshī, *al-Tafsīr*, 1: 9.
4. Ḥur al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil al-Shīʿa*, 6: 199.
5. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 110.
6. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, 42.
7. Barqī, *al-Maḥāsin*, 1: 52.
8. Ibid., 1: 50.

5. Truly, when a person stands for prayer, their body, their clothes, and everything around them glorifies God.[1]

6. Clean and [tidy] clothes dispel worries, for cleanliness is purity for prayer.[2]

7. Know that every single one of your duties is subordinate to prayer.[3]

8. The light of a believer comes from night vigil [in worship]. Illuminate your heart with worship in the heart of the night.[4]

Asceticism and Piety

1. The most emphasized moral virtue in religion is zuhd (abstinence) in the world.[5]

2. Whoever practices zuhd (abstinence) towards the world, hardships become easy for them.[6]

3. Zuhd in the world means shortening one's desires [and not seeking worldly possessions], being grateful for blessings, and abstaining from [committing] acts that God Almighty has forbidden.[7]

4. Indeed, the sign of one eager for the rewards of the Hereafter is their zuhd (abstinence) towards the beauty of this world. Truly, the zuhd of the abstainer in this world will not decrease anything from what God has ordained for them, even if they practice zuhd [and turn their eyes away from it]. Indeed, the greed of the greedy and the [avarice] of the covetous for the beauty of this world will not increase anything for them, even if they are greedy and covetous. Therefore, the deceived and the loser is the one who is deprived of their share in the Hereafter.[8]

5. Imam ʿAlī (a) wrote to one of his companions, admonishing him: "I enjoin pon you—and upon myself—the fear of Him whom it is never permissible for you to disobey, and from whom none but He is to be hoped, and to whom alone belongs all richness and sufficiency. For whoever is mindful of God becomes mighty and strong; he is satisfied and content, his thirst is quenched, and his intellect is raised above the people of this world. His body remains among the people of this world, while his heart and mind

1. Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, 2: 377.
2. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 6: 444.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 27.
4. Ṭabrisī, *Nath al-laʾālī*, 102.
5. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 128.
6. Ibid., 2: 50.
7. Ibid., 5: 71.
8. Ibid., 2: 129.

witness the Hereafter. Thus, through the light of his heart, he extinguishes what his eyes behold of the love of this world."[1]

6. The pious in this world are people of virtue. Their speech is rational, their garments simple, and their gait embodies humility. They lower their eyes, avoiding what God has forbidden them to see, and dedicate their ears to hearing words of wisdom that bring them benefit. Their hearts are at peace, both in times of tribulation, and in times of prosperity.[2]

7. O child of Adam, if you seek from the world that which is sufficient for you, then verily the least of it will suffice you. And if you seek something that will not suffice you, then verily all that is in it will not suffice you.[3]

8. Focus your attention more on the acceptance of your deeds than on the performance of them.[4]

9. God has made me a leader of the people and has obligated me to behave like the weak [and poor] in terms of my food and clothing, so that the poor may follow my poverty and the rich may not transgress due to their wealth.[5]

Remembrance of the Resurrection

1. The world is a course through which we must pass, not a permanent home. Its people are of two kinds: those who sell their souls and destroy them, and those who ransom their souls and set them free.[6]

2. Time wears out bodies, renews hopes, draws death close, and makes goals distant. It wearies those who win a share and grieves those who don't.[7]

3. We have not been created to live in this world, we have not been commanded to strive for this world, we have been placed in it in order to be tested.[8]

4. No day passes over the child of Adam except that it calls out to him: "I am a new day and a witness over you. So speak good in me and act righteously so that I may testify for you on the Day of Resurrection. For indeed, you will never see me again after this."[9]

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1. Warrām, *Tanbīh al-khawāṭir*, 2: 195.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 193.
3. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 138-39.
4. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 1: 14.
5. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 410.
6. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 133.
7. Ibid., wisdom 72.
8. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 55.
9. Ṣadūq, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, 4: 397.

5. ʿAlī (a) retorted to a man whom he overheard criticizing this world: "You who reproach this world—do you choose to be deceived by her yet censure her? Should you be accusing her, or should she be accusing you? When did she lure or deceive you? Was it by her destruction of your father and grand- father and great-grandfather through decay? Or by her consigning your mother and grandmother and great-grandmother to the earth?1 How carefully did your hands tend them! How tenderly did your fingers nurse them! All the while you were hoping against hope for a cure, begging physician after physician for a treatment. Your apprehension did not benefit any one of them, your appeal remained unanswered, and you could not keep death away from them, even though you applied all your strength. In this way, the world warned you of your own approaching end. By their death, she illustrated your own. Indeed, this world is a house of truth for all who stay true to her, a house of wellbeing for all who understand her, a house of riches for all who gather her provisions, a house of counsel for all who take her advice. She is a mosque for God's loved ones, a place where God's angels pray, where God's revelation alights, where God's saints transact, earning his mercy and gaining paradise. Who would blame her, when she has declared her imminent separation, proclaimed her impending departure, and announced her and her people's impending destruction? By her trials she has illustrated the greatest trial, and by her delights awakened a desire for the truest delight. In the evening she leaves you healthy and happy, only to turn up the next morning with a terrible calamity. All this, to awaken your desire and your alarm, to stir up your fear and your vigilance. Some will blame her on the morning of regret. Others will praise her on the day of resurrection. For she reminded them, and they took heed. She told them about herself, and they believed. She counseled them, and they were mindful."[1]

6. Blessed is he who contemplates the return to God, does good in anticipation of judgment, con- tents himself with basic rations, and accepts God's will.[2]

7. What I fear most for you is the pursuit of desire and lengthy yearnings. Take provisions in this world, from this world, to nourish your souls tomorrow.[3]

8. He who counts tomorrow as part of his life has not placed death in its [proper] place.[4]

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1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 131.
2. Ibid., wisdom 44.
3. Ibid., sermon 28.
4. Kūfī al-Ahwāzī, *al-Zuhd*, 87.

9. No servant lengthened their hopes except that they corrupted their deeds.[1]

10. How many are the heedless who sew a garment to wear, while it is their shroud, and build a house to dwell in, while it is their tomb![2]

11. From words ʿAlī (a) often addressed in oration to his associates: "Gather your supplies—May God have mercy on you!—for the call has come to depart. Lessen your inclination toward the world and see that you leave your present life with provisions. A tough ascent lies ahead with fearsome and strange waystations through which you must pass and at which you must alight. Know this: Death homes in on you. Imagine that you are already trying to ward off its claws, that its horrors and fearsome calamities are already upon you. Cut off all ties to this world and prepare provisions of piety."[3]

12. It was said to the Commander of the Faithful (a), "What is preparedness for death?" He replied, "[It is] fulfilling the obligatory duties, avoiding the forbidden things, and adorning oneself with noble virtues. Then such a person no longer cares whether he goes toward death or death comes toward him."[4]

13. ʿAlī (a) was following a bier in a funeral procession when he heard a man laugh. He exclaimed: "We behave as though death were decreed for everyone other than ourselves, as though duties were incumbent upon everyone other than ourselves, as if those who die before our eyes are travelers who will soon return! We consign their bodies to the grave and consume their wealth, forgetting every counselor and shrugging off every tragedy."[5]

14. A Muslim has three companions. One companion says to him "I am with you in life and in death," and that is his deeds. Another companion says: "I am with you until you die," and that is his wealth, for when he dies it passes on to his heirs. And a third companion says: "I am with you until the door of your grave, and then I leave you," and that is his child.[6]

15- When [Imam ʿAlī (a)] looked at the graveyard, he said: "O people of desolate abodes, ruined quarters, and dark tombs! O people of dust, O people of exile, O people of isolation, O people of desolation! You preceded us, and we shall follow. As for your homes—others have occupied them. As for your wives—others have bedded them. As for your properties—others have divided them. This is our news—what is yours?" Then

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1. Ibid., 87.
2. Ṣadūq, *ʿUyūnu akhbār al-Riḍā* (*a*), 1: 297.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 204.
4. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 110.
5. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 122.
6. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 108.

he turned to his companions and said: "If they were permitted to answer, they would say, 'The best provision is piety'."[1]

16. Indeed, Paradise has eight gates: a gate through which the prophets and the truthful enter; a gate through which the martyrs and the righteous enter; five gates through which our Shiites and those who love us enter. I will continue to stand on the Sirat and pray, "O Lord, keep my Shiites, those who love me, my companions, and anyone who has allegiance to me in the world safe." Then, suddenly, a call from the Throne above will come: "Your prayer has been answered, and your intercession for your Shiites has been accepted." Each of my Shiites, and those who have allegiance to me, have helped me, and have fought against my enemy with their hands and tongues, will intercede for 70,000 of their neighbors and relatives. Another gate is for other Muslims who bear witness to "There is no god but God" and do not have an iota of hatred for us, the members of the household of the Prophet, in their hearts.[2]

17. [Imam ʿAlī (a) said among his companions]: "Indeed, there is a rotating mill in Hell. Do you not ask what it grinds?" They said, "O Commander of the Faithful, what does it grind?" He said, "Sinful scholars, corrupt reciters, oppressive tyrants, treacherous ministers, and lying gnostics."[3]

18. From an address by ʿAlī (a) upon reciting, "They are men whom neither commerce nor trade distracts from God's remembrance" (Q 24:36-37): "God has made his remembrance the burnish for your hearts2—with it, you can hear after your earlier deafness, see after your earlier night-blindness, and quieten after your earlier recalcitrance. Age after age, even in periods of dormancy, God communicates with certain servants whose minds he speaks to and whose intellects he engages, who kindle bright lamps of vigilance in people's ears, eyes, and hearts. God's gifts are precious! Guides in the wilder- ness, his chosen men remind the nations of his special days,3 and warn them that their meeting with him is near. They praise those who keep to the middle road and give them tidings of salvation, they censure those who stray to the right and the left and caution them against damnation—in this way, they serve as lamps in times of darkness and guides in periods of doubt. Remembrance is the province of men who consider it fair exchange for worldly chattels, neither commerce nor trade distracts them from it. They traverse their days always remembering God, crying warnings against the illicit to the ears of the heedless, commanding justice and undertaking it, forbidding evil

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 130.
2. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 2: 408.
3. Ṣadūq, *Thawāb al-aʿmāl*, 254.

and staying away from it. You would think they have already cut through the world to the hereafter and are there now, as though they have already witnessed what is beyond the grave. You would think they were privy to the mysteries of the Barzakh from long residence in it,1 as though they have already seen the resurrection fulfilling its promise. These men draw back the veil for the living, until those who heed them see what most cannot see and hear what most cannot hear. You will see the strength of their piety if you picture them in their praiseworthy standings and laudable sittings. You will see them as they unfold the registers of their deeds and apply themselves to reckoning their accounts; as they list every small and large deed they were commanded to perform but fell short in accomplishing, and note every one they were forbidden but transgressed; as they feel the weight of their sins on their backs, but find themselves too weak to bear the burden; as they sob then and choke with tears, and wail to one another, and cry out to their Lord from repentance and recognition. You will see that they are true banners of guidance and lamps in the darkness, shaded by angels, enveloped by gentle calm, awaited by heaven's open doors. There, they are promised seats of high honor near God—he will be pleased with their deeds and praise their efforts, and they will surely inhale the wafting fragrance of his pardon. In this world, they choose to remain hostage to his generosity and captives to his majesty. Long repentance has wounded their hearts and long weeping has wounded their eyes. Their hand knocks ceaselessly at every door of divine supplication—and surely, they petition the one whose generosity never fades, whose suppliants are never rebuffed. O listener, call yourself to account for your own soul! Other souls have a reckoner other than you."[1]

19. Men today fall into one of four categories: One is prevented from spreading corruption on earth by the weakness of his person, the dullness of his blade, and the sparseness of his wealth. Another unsheathes his sword, announces his intention, and assembles foot soldiers and cavalry, selling his soul and forfeiting his religion to amass baubles, lead an army, or ascend a pulpit—what a terrible transaction, when you deem the world an equitable price for your soul, a fair exchange for heavenly reward! A third seeks worldly gain by performing the deeds of the hereafter, rather than seeking the hereafter by performing good deeds in this world; he appears calm in his person, walks with slow steps, tucks up his garments, and presents himself as a trustworthy man, taking advantage of the concealment offered by God's veil to sin. A fourth is only prevented from seeking power by his own servility and lack of support—these are what keeps him

1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 222.

in his place. He wears the mark of contentment and dons the garment of renunciants, but neither his haunts in the daytime nor his retreats in the night are anything like theirs. Only a few men remain—their eyes are wet with remembrance of the return to God, and their tears flow from fear of the resurrection. One is a solitary fugitive, another is curbed by fear, a third is shushed and muzzled, a fourth, sincere, prays, and a fifth is bereaved and grieving. They are weakened by terror and humiliated on all sides; they drink from a bitter sea, tongues silenced, hearts wounded. They gave counsel until exhausted, now they are beaten down; almost all have been killed off, only a few remain.[1]

20. In a time now past, I had a brother whom I loved in God's name.4 What made him great in my eyes was the smallness of the world in his. He was not controlled by his stomach—he neither craved what he could not have, nor indulged in what he had obtained. Mostly, he was silent. When he spoke, he quietened all who spoke and quenched the thirst of any who sought. He was frail, and people considered him weak, but when battle approached, he was a lion of the thicket, a viper of the ravine. He never presented an argument unless it was decisive. He never censured anyone for what might be excused until he had heard them out. He never complained of an ailment until he had recovered. He preached only what he practiced, and never what he did not. He may have been overcome in words, but he was never overcome in silence—he was more eager to listen than to speak. If two options presented themselves to him, he would look to see which appealed to his passions and do the opposite. You, too, should emulate these character traits. Stay with them, race to acquire them. If you cannot do them all, then know that doing a little is better than renouncing a lot.[2]

Learning from History

1. Learn lessons from what arrogant nations before you faced: God's crushing blows, his sudden attacks, his shocking onslaughts, and his exemplary punishments. Take counsel from knowing that their cheeks are now stuck inside the earth and their torsos are struck onto the ground. Seek refuge in God from the pregnant dangers of pride, just as you seek refuge in him from the battering calamities of the age … Beware of exemplary punishments that befell earlier nations because of their evil acts and hateful deeds. Recall their conditions, the good and then the bad, and beware of becoming like them. Think about the change in their states. Hold fast to everything that gave them might, scattered their enemies, spread wellbeing among them, attracted beneficence to them, and

1. Ibid., sermon 32.
2. Ibid., wisdom 289.

bolstered the bonds of generosity—avoidance of division, holding fast to friendship, promoting harmony, and counselling one another to unite. Refrain from every- thing that broke their spine and weakened their strength—malice in the heart, rancor in the breast, turning one's back, and withholding one's hand. Reflect on the condition of past believers. Think about how they lived through states of trial and testing.[1]

2. Do you not dwell in the abodes of those who came before you and enjoyed longer lives, who left behind more lasting monuments, had lengthier aspirations, were more profuse in number, and led vaster armies? They worshipped the world abjectly, they gave it preference, fully and truly, but they left it without sufficient provisions for the journey, or even a mount to carry them on its back. Have you ever heard that the world in its generosity let a single soul escape in lieu of ransom, or that it gave them any form of help, or offered to accompany them? No. It crushed them with catastrophes, weakened them with calamities, shook them with misfortunes, ground their noses in the dust, trampled them under its hooves, and equipped fate to bring them down. You have seen how it rejected those who bowed before it, gave it preference, and offered it loyalty. Their departure is an eternal separation. Did the world sup- ply them with anything other than thirst, house them in anything other than narrow graves, give them anything other than dark gloom, or requite them with anything other than regret? Is this the same world that you too favor above all else, put your faith in, covet? What a wretched abode for those who do not view it with suspicion, who are not on their guard![2]

3. Commander of the Faithful (a) wrote in a letter to his son: "Revive your heart with pious counsel … Give it warning of the violent attacks of fate and the horrible changes wrought by the passage of nights and days. Place before it reports of past peoples and remind it of the calamities that befell the ancients. Walk among their dwellings, their ruins, and reflect: What happened to them? What did they leave behind? Where did they take up residence? You will find that they left their loved ones and took residence in a strange land. Before long, you too will join them … My dear son! Although I have not lived as long as those before me, I have reflected upon their acts, pondered their histories, and walked among their ruins, until I am almost one of them. In fact, because of what I have learned of their affairs, I feel as though I have lived with the first of them all the way to the last of them. I have distinguished the pure from the impure and the beneficial from the harmful."[3]

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1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 192.
2. Ibid., sermon 111.
3. Ibid., letter 31.

Prayer

1. Supplication is the shield of the believer. If you knock persistently, the door will be opened for you.[1]

2. The most beloved of deeds on Earth to God Almighty is supplication, and the best form of worship is chastity.[2]

3. A man who is afflicted, whose hardship is severe, is not more in need of prayer than a man who has been spared but has no guarantee of safety.[3]

4. Supplication repels the definitively decreed [divine] fate, so take it as your provision.[4]

5. Fortunate is the one who keeps their worship and supplication pure for God, whose heart is not preoccupied by what their eyes see, whose remembrance of God is not forgotten by what their ears hear, and whose heart is not filled with grief by what is given to others.[5]

6. Supplication is the key to victory and the path to salvation. The best supplication is that which comes from a pure chest and a pious heart. The means of salvation lie in communion with God, and liberation is found in sincerity. If fear intensifies, then God is the refuge.[6]

7. Seize the opportunity to supplicate in these four instances: while reciting the Quran, at the time of the call to prayer (*adhān*), during rainfall, and at the moment when warriors clash, seeking martyrdom.[7]

8. God Almighty does not accept the supplication of a heedless person... When one of you supplicates for the deceased, while their heart is heedless of them, they should not supplicate, but rather strive and exert themselves in supplicating for them.[8]

9. A person who prays without deeds is like an archer who shoots with an unstrung bow.[9]

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1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 468.
2. Ibid., 2: 467-68.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 302.
4. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 2: 620.
5. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 16.
6. Ibid., 2: 468.
7. Ibid., 2: 477.
8. Ibid., 2: 473.
9. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 337.

Ethics

1. Within good character lie the treasures of sustenance.[1]

2. Cheerfulness is a snare for friendship.[2]

3. Whoever has a gentle speech, their love is obligatory.[3]

4. The most faithful among you is the one with the best character.[4]

5. Good character is the best companion.[5]

6. Affection is one half of discernment.[6]

7. Good character lies in three things: abstaining from the forbidden, seeking lawful [provision], and generosity towards one's family and dependents.[7]

8. Truly, the best way for people to win the hearts of friends and dispel the resentment of enemies is to be cheerful upon meeting them, inquire about their well-being when apart, and maintain a pleasant demeanor in their presence.[8]

9. Beware of self-admiration, ill temper, and impatience, for with these traits, no friend will remain for you, and people will always avoid you because of them.[9]

10. Whoever is granted four qualities has truly been given the good of this world and the Hereafter, and has reaped their benefit: piety that keeps them away from divine prohibitions, good character with which they live among people, patience with which they repel the ignorance of the ignorant from themselves, and a righteous spouse who helps them in the matters of this world and the Hereafter.[10]

Good Manners in Dealing with People

1. Associate with people in such a manner that they cherish your company while you live and weep for your loss when you die.[11]

2. Know that whoever treats people with fairness, God will only increase him in honor and dignity.[12]

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1. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 8: 23.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 6.
3. Karājakī, *Kanz al-fawā'id*, 1: 320.
4. Ḥur al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasā'il al-Shīʿa*, 12: 152.
5. Ṣadūq, *ʿUyūnu akhbār al-Riḍā* (*a*), 2: 38.
6. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 142.
7. Warrām, *Tanbīh al-khawāṭir*, 1: 90.
8. Ibn Shuʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 218.
9. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 1: 147.
10. Warrām, *Tanbīh al-khawāṭir*, 2: 71.
11. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 10.
12. Ḥur al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasā'il al-Shīʿa*, 15: 283.

3. Visit the one who does not come to see you, and give a gift to the one who does not give you a gift.[1]

4. Dedicate your life and wealth to your brother [in faith], justice and fairness to your enemy, and kindness and benevolence to all.[2]

5. Listen to me! A pious reputation, one that God sustains through people's tongues, is better for a person than any wealth he may leave behind for his ungrateful heirs.[3]

6. It is fitting to have both a need for people and a detachment from them in your heart. Needing people results in soft speech and a cheerful face, while detachment from them preserves your honor and dignity.[4]

7. Know that when God's blessings increase for a person, people's petitions to him also increase. The one who shares his blessings as he ought to do for the sake of God earns their continuance and perpetuity. The one who does not share them as he ought to do for the sake of God exposes them to cessation and termination.[5]

8. People! Blessed are those whose faults distract them from the faults of others.2 Blessed are those who remain in their homes, eat their food, occupy themselves with acts of obedience for their Lord, weep for their sins, and weary themselves by constant chiding, while never causing others unease.[6]

9. People! Even the wealthy man needs his kin, and he needs them to defend him with hand and tongue. Their backing is his best protection, and their support gives strength to his shaky affairs. When a calamity hits him, they show him the most com- passion. A true tongue granted by God to a man among his people brings him more benefit than the wealth he leaves for another. Harken to my words! Let none of you turn away from an impoverished relative. Your wealth will not increase if you withhold your largesse or decrease if you provide. The man who is close-fisted with kin will find that his closed fist will be countered with many closed fists. The man who possesses gentleness will keep his people's affection.[7]

10. When Imam Ali (a) saw that a sick person had recovered, he would say to them, "May your purification from sins be blessed."[8]

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1. Ṣadūq, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, 3: 300.
2. Ibn Shuʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 212.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 120.
4. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 149.
5. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 272.
6. Ibid., sermon 175.
7. Ibid., sermon 23.
8. Rāwandī, *Salwat al-ḥazīn*, 228.

11. And a man who went out to visit a sick person, and then died, will have Paradise.[1]

12. Indeed, the greatest reward belongs to those visitors who keep their visits brief when they go to visit their sick Muslim brother, unless the sick person enjoys their presence and requests them to stay longer.[2]

Maintaining Ties of Kinship

1. Maintain ties of kinship, even if it is only by greeting them with peace, for God Almighty says: "Be wary of Allah, in whose Name you adjure one another and [of severing ties with] blood relations. Indeed Allah is watchful over you." (Q 4:1)[3]

2. If people cut ties with their relatives, their wealth will fall into the hands of evildoers.[4]

3. In the book of [Imam] ʿAlī (a) [it is stated]: There are three characteristics whose possessor will not die without experiencing their harm: oppression, severing ties of kinship, and a false oath by which one contends with God. Indeed, the swiftest reward that exists for obedience [to God] is maintaining ties of kinship [and caring for relatives]. Some people, even though they are wicked, because they interact [with their relatives], their wealth increases, and they become rich. Verily, a false oath and severing ties of kinship will empty lands of their inhabitants and cause relatives to migrate, and the migration of relatives will lead to the cessation of lineage and offspring.[5]

Friendship and Companionship

1. Ceasing to inquire about friends leads to distance and a breakdown in connection.[6]

2. Meeting with brothers [in faith] is a great gain, even if they are few in number.[7]

3. When I give a gift to my Muslim brother that benefits him, it is more beloved to me than giving the same amount in charity.[8]

4. A friend is not true unless he protects his brother in three circumstances: in his misfortune, during his absence, and after his death.[9]

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1. Ṣadūq, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, 1: 140.
2. Ḥimyarī, *Qurb al-isnād*, 13.
3. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 155.
4. Ibid., 2: 348.
5. Ibid., 2: 347.
6. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 303.
7. Ḥur al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasā'il al-Shīʿa*, 14: 586.
8. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 5: 144.
9. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 134.

5. Keeping company with the frivolous corrupts morals, while competing with the wise improves them.[1]

6. When ʿAlī (a) ascended the pulpit, he would say: "A Muslim should avoid befriending and associating with a liar, for life alongside him will not be pleasant for you: he will carry your words to others and bring the words of others to you. No piece of news will reach its end without him bringing forth another. [This situation] will escalate to the point where even when he speaks the truth, he will not be believed. He will spread gossip among people, create enmity between them, and sow the seeds of hatred in their hearts."[2]

7. There is no harm in associating with a wise person, even if you do not benefit from their generosity and magnanimity. Seek to benefit from the wisdom of your wise friend and distance yourself from those with bad tempers. Never avoid the company of the generous, for even if you do not gain from their wisdom, you can still utilize your own intellect to benefit from their generosity. As much as possible, distance yourself from the foolish and ignoble person.[3]

8. Associate with good people, and you will be one of them. Stay away from evil people, and you will be separate from them.[4]

9. People! Whoever knows his brother to have strong faith and good ways should not give ear to the rumors men spread about him.[5]

10. Avoid conflict and contention, for they sicken the hearts against friends and brothers [in faith] and cause hypocrisy to grow among them.[6]

11. Chastise your brother by being good to him. Deflect his malice by being generous to him.[7]

Truthfulness and the Prohibition of Lying

1. Truthfulness is beneficial in all things, and it will keep you safe even if you fear it.[8]

2. Truly, the truthful one is on the verge of salvation and dignity, while the liar is on the brink of destruction and ruin. Speak the truth so that you may be known by it, and act upon it so that you may be among its people.[9]

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1. Irbilī, *Kashf al-ghumma*, 2: 350.
2. Baqī, *al-Maḥāsin*, 1: 118-17.
3. Ibn Shuʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 206.
4. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, letter 31.
5. Ibid., sermon 141.
6. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 300.
7. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 158.
8. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, 59-60.
9. Ibn Shuʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 151.

3. Pursue honesty and trustworthiness; do not lie to someone who has lied to you, and do not betray someone who has betrayed you.[1]

4. A person's truthfulness is their salvation.[2]

5. No servant shall taste the flavor of faith unless they abandon falsehood, whether in jest or seriousness.[3]

6. Falsehood, whether serious or in jest, will never find stability. Never make a false promise to your child that you will not fulfill. Indeed, lying leads to sin, and sin leads to the fire of Hell. Let no one persist in lying to the extent that they are known as a liar and sinner, and become so accustomed to lying that there remains not even a mustard seed's weight of truth in their heart, and they are recognized as a liar before God.[4]

Prohibition of Envy

1. Whoever abandons envy will find their love in the hearts of people.[5]

2. No peace is found with sinfulness, no comfort with envy, and no affection with distress.[6]

3. Do not envy or be jealous, for envy destroys faith just as fire consumes firewood.[7]

4. Envy is an incurable disease that only disappears with the destruction of the envier or the death of the envied.[8]

5. Know that even the slightest envy is like a contagious disease for the body and soul. It begins within one's own being [and spreads to others] like a child or a father [passing it on], and then extends from close relatives to distant ones. May God protect you from envy and destitution.[9]

Patience

1. Three things are the gateway to goodness: a generous soul, pleasant speech, and patience in the face of adversity.[10]

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1. Muḥaddith al-Nūrī, *Mustadrak*, 14: 15.
2. Ṭabrisī, *Nathr al-la'ālī*, 78.
3. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 340.
4. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 419.
5. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 86.
6. Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 1: 303.
7. Ibn Shuʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 151-52.
8. Muḥaddith al-Nūrī, *Mustadrak*, 12: 22.
9. Ḥalwānī, *Nuzhat al-nāẓir*, 69.
10. Barqī, *al-Maḥāsin*, 1: 6.

2. Those who are not saved by patience are slain by panic.[1]

3. Cast off the fevers of anxiety with patient resolve and seemly conviction.[2]

4. Success comes to those who are patient, even if the wait is long.[3]

5. Hardships and miseries have limits that they will inevitably reach. When you are condemned to these matters [and face hardship], surrender to them and be patient until they pass. For seeking a solution for them will only increase the hardship.[4]

6. Patience is rewarded in proportion to the affliction. Those who strike their hand on their thigh when afflicted lose their reward.[5]

7. Do not give in to impatience, for it destroys hope [in divine grace], weakens [obedience to divine commands], and leaves you with sorrow.[6]

8. It is narrated from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) that he said: "One day, Commander of the Faithful (a) entered the mosque and found a grieving man at the door. He asked him, 'What is the matter with you?' The man replied, 'I am mourning the loss of my father, mother, and brother, and I fear that I will die from this grief.' Commander of the Faithful (a) said to him, 'Maintain piety and be patient so that you may enter upon God tomorrow [on the Day of Judgment in the company of the patient]. Patience in the face of events is like the head to the body; when the head is separated from the body, the body becomes decayed [and lifeless], and when you abandon patience and forbearance, the affairs of life will be ruined'."[7]

Generosity and Stinginess

1. The masters of the people in this world are the generous, and in the Hereafter, the pious.[8]

2. True generosity is spontaneous. Giving when solicited is merely to avoid shame and blame.[9]

3. Among the worst traits are stinginess and harshness when collecting a debt.[10]

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1. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 189.
2. Ibid., letter 31.
3. Ibid., wisdom 153.
4. Ibn Humām al-Iskāfī, *al-Tamḥīṣ*, 64.
5. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 144.
6. Ibn al-Ashʿath, *al-Jaʿfariyyāt*, 234.
7. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 90.
8. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 32.
9. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 53.
10. Muḥaddith al-Nūrī, *Mustadrsk*, 13: 412.

4. Being stingy with what one possesses is to have ill thoughts about the [generosity] of the Creator.[1]

5. Woe to the miser! He brought forth the poverty he was fleeing and abandoned the wealth he sought.[2]

Humility

1. There is no nobility like humility, and no loneliness more terrifying than self-admiration. I marvel at the arrogant person who was a sperm yesterday and will be a corpse tomorrow.[3]

2. Visiting the underprivileged is a sign of humility.[4]

3. There is none of the children of Adam but that his affair is in the hands of an angel. When he behaves arrogantly, the angel throws him to the ground and says to him, "Be humble, lest God humiliate you." When he practices humility, the angel raises his forehead and says to him, "Raise your head, God will elevate you and will not humiliate you for your humility before Him."[5]

4. Silence generates awe, justice multiplies friends, generosity elevates stature, humility completes blessings, providing for others brings glory, upright behavior vanquishes the enemy, and forbearance in the face of a fool increases your helpers against him.[6]

5. Blessed is the one whose own shortcomings prevent them from finding fault with others, and who practices humility even where they have no flaws.[7]

6. Imam ʿAlī (a) said to his son, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya: "Your humility in a state of honor [and nobility] is more honorable for you than the honor [derived from the honor] of your forefathers."[8]

Arrogance and Conceit

1. The smug invite detractors.[9]

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1. Āmidī, Ghurar al-ḥikam, 67.
2. Ibid., 728.
3. Fattāl al-Nayshābūrī, *Rawḍat al-wāʿiḍīn*, 2: 382.
4. Ṭabrisī, *Nathr al-laʾālī*, 72.
5. Ṣadūq, *Thawāb al-aʿmāl*, 176.
6. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 224.
7. Qummī, *Tafsīr*, 2: 70-71.
8. Ṣadūq, *al-Iʿtiqādāt*, 112.
9. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 6.

2. Conceit is contrary to the right path and a plague of the wise.[1]

3. Vanity impedes growth.[2]

4. A sin that makes you sorrowful is better than a good deed that makes you conceited.[3]

5. There is no loneliness and sorrow worse than conceit.[4]

6. Arrogance is the great snare of Satan.[5]

7. Arrogance leads to falling into the clutches of sins.[6]

8. The conceit of a person is evidence of the weakness of their intellect.[7]

9. Arrogance [and conceit] reveal vices [and evils].[8]

Prohibition of Hypocrisy

1. A hypocrite has three signs: when they see people, they become cheerful; when they are alone, they become gloomy; and they love to be praised in all their affairs.[9]

2. Whoever performs a [good] deed for the sake of boasting, God will resurrect them on the Day of Judgment with a blackened face.[10]

3. Fear God in such a way that you do not need to apologize. Perform your deeds for God alone, without showing off or seeking fame. Truly, whoever acts for other than God, God will leave him to his deeds on the Day of Resurrection.[11]

4. When Imam ʿAlī (a) was asked about the most wretched of people, he said, "The one who abandoned the world for the sake of the world, thus losing both the world and the Hereafter. Also, the one who worshipped, fasted, and strived excessively out of hypocrisy [to appear pious to people]. So he has lost the pleasures of our world and has endured the hardship of what, if he had done it sincerely and deserved the divine reward, he would have embraced. He enters the Hereafter [and the Day of Reckoning] thinking

1. Ibn Shuʿba, *Tuḥaf al-ʿuqūl*, 74.
2. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 167.
3. Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 236.
4. Irbilī, *Kasf al-ghumma*, 1: 384.
5. Muḥaddith al-Nūrī, *Mustadrsk*, 12: 28.
6. Āmidī, Ghurar al-ḥikam, 84.
7. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 27.
8. Āmidī, Ghurar al-ḥikam, 36.
9. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2: 295.
10. Ṣadūq, *Thawāb al-aʿmāl*, 255.
11. Barqī, *al-Maḥāsin*, 1: 254.

that the scales of his deeds are heavier than what he has done [and deserves Paradise], but [in reality] he will find it all gone."[1]

Supporting the Orphan

1. Indeed, the Imām [and ruler] is the father of orphans.[2]

2. Whoever takes care of an orphan, shows mercy to the weak, and treats their parents, servants, and people with kindness and compassion, God Almighty will admit them into His Paradise and bestow His mercy upon them. Whoever controls their anger, expands their contentment, bestows their goodness, cares for their relatives, and fulfills trusts, God Almighty will bring them forth on the Day of Resurrection in His greatest light.[3]

3. No believing man or woman places their hand of mercy and compassion on the head of an orphan, except that God writes a good deed for them for every hair on the orphan's head.[4]

Raising Children

1. A child has a right over their father, and a father has a right over their child. The right of the father is that the child obeys them in all things, except in disobeying God Almighty. And the right of the child over the father is that they give them a good name, teach them good manners, and instruct them in the Qur'ān.[5]

2. Train the child for seven years, teach them manners for seven years, and employ them for seven years. Their height [growth] will be complete by the age of 23 and their intellect by 35. After that, they will live through the experiences of time.[6]

3. I did not ask my Lord for beautiful children, nor for tall children. I asked my Lord for children obedient to God and fearful of Him, so that when I look at them, I find them obedient to God and my eyes are enlightened.[7]

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1. Warrām, *Tanbīh al-khawāṭir*, 2: 95.
2. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1: 406.
3. Ibn al-Ashʿath, *al-Jaʿfariyyāt*, 166-67.
4. Ṣadūq, *Thawāb al-aʿmāl*, 199.
5. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, wisdom 399.
6. Ṣadūq, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, 3: 493.
7. Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 101: 98.

4. There is no house in which [someone] has a name like that of a Prophet [of God] except that God assigns an angel to send blessings upon them every morning and evening.[1]

Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

1. O people, if a group of people commits a sin in secret, such that others are not aware of it, God will not punish everyone for the sin of that group. However, if a group commits a sin openly, and the people do not change it, then both groups will deserve punishment from the Lord.[2]

2. Commanding good and forbidding evil are traits of divinity, they will not hasten your death or decrease your sustenance.[3]

3. The least one can do to condemn [inappropriate actions] is to face the wrongdoers with frowns and sullen expressions.[4]

4. Whoever abandons forbidding evil by their heart, hand, and tongue, [it is as if] they are dead among the living.[5]

5. The one who oppresses, the one who helps them, and the one who consents to it are all partners [in the oppression].[6]

6. Among the commandments of Imam ʿAlī (a) was this: "Do not abandon enjoining good and forbidding evil, lest the most wicked of you gain authority over you, and no matter how much you pray against them [and curse them], your prayers will not be answered."[7]

1. Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, 453-54.
2. Ibid., 55.
3. Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, sermon 156.
4. Ṭūsī, *Thadhīb al-aḥkām*, 6: 177.
5. Mufīd, *al-Muqniʿa*, 808-9.
6. Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, 1: 107.
7. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 7: 52.

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